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SIX SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE

The Right Hon. PAUL LE MESURIER,

LORD MAYOR

OF THE

CITY OF LONDON.

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SIX SERMONS

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LORD MAYOR

OF THE

CITY OF LONDON.

BY GEORGE STEPNEY TOWNLEY, M. A.
CHAPLAIN TO HIS LORDSHIP,
RECTOR OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF
ST. STEPHEN, WALBROOK, AND ST. BENNET SHEREHOG,
AND
LECTURER OF ST. DUNSTAN'S IN THE EAST.

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MDCCXCIV.

27

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TO

The Right Hon. PAUL LE MESURIER,

LORD MAYOR,

OF THE

CITY OF LONDON.

MY LORD,

YOUR Lordſhip's kindneſs to me has eventually given birth to the following pages: I cannot ſend them into the world without expreſſing my ſtrong ſenſe of your private virtues. Your Lordſhip's public ſervices during your Mayoralty, and in an eminent degree in the Month of Auguſt laſt, are univerſally acknowledged.

With ardent wiſhes for your Lordſhip's Welfare, for the Peace of this City, and for the Proſperity of the Nation, I have the honour to be,

MY LORD,

Your Lordſhip's much obliged,

And faithful ſervant,

WALBROOK,
OCTOBER 25, 1794.

G. S. TOWNLEY.

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ON THE HOLY COMMUNION.

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Parish Church of St. Lawrence Jewry,

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,

THE

ALDERMEN, SHERIFFS,

AND THE

COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LONDON,

ON SUNDAY, THE TWELFTH OF JANUARY, 1794,

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED

FOR ADMINISTERING THE HOLY COMMUNION

TO THE

MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION.

SERMON I.

I CORINTHIANS, CHAP. XI. VER. 28.

LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND DRINK OF THAT CUP.

WHOEVER acknowledges the Love of our Redeemer in aſſuming our nature, that by his death he might be "the propitiation for "our ſins;" whoever is ſenſible of the benefits and bleſſings derived to mankind from his inſtruction and example, cannot be blameleſs in wilfully neglecting his command, "This do "in remembrance of Me." And yet, among the omiſſions of duty, which may with too much truth be laid to the charge of many, who "name "the name of Chriſt," we find inattention to this apoſtolical inſtruction—"Let a man ex-"amine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of that "bread, and drink of that cup."

In this nation, among thoſe who profeſs to reverence the authority of Chriſt, ſome object—to *any* participation of the Holy Communion; others—to the *Mode* of Communion enjoined in our eſtabliſhed Church; and others—to the interference of the Legiſlature in requiring a compliance with that mode, in thoſe who are to be entruſted with power under Government.

It may not be inapplicable to the preſent ſolemnity, if I conſider, and, according to my ability, endeavour to remove, ſome of the objections advanced on thoſe three Grounds.

I.—It is charitable to conclude, that thoſe perſons, who reverence the authority of Chriſt, and yet object to "eating of that bread, and "drinking of that cup in remembrance of him," are in that omiſſion actuated by error in judgment, not by perverſeneſs of will: yet, as the example countenances, and is intended to juſtify, the neglect of that Chriſtian duty, it may be expedient to examine the grounds of their objection.

In juſtification of a total diſregard of the Holy Communion, it is contended, that, under grace, Believers are above ordinances, and are releaſed

releaſed from the obſervance of ceremonial and poſitive duties.—In defence of this principle, ſome paſſages are adduced from the writings of St. Paul, in which he extols "faith," and decries "the works of the law:" in particular, his expoſtulating with his converts, "why, as "though living in the world, are ye ſubject to "ordinances?"* "How turn ye again to the "weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye "deſire again to be in bondage?"† But, before we infer from theſe and ſimilar paſſages that Believers are releaſed from the obſervance of every ceremonial and poſitive duty, we ſhould conſider what "ordinances," what "weak and "beggarly elements," the Apoſtle had in view.

Certain judaizing inſtructors, who were deſirous to ſuperadd the burdenſome rites and ceremonies of the Moſaic law to the Chriſtian covenant, had taught "the Brethren, Except "ye be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, "ye cannot be ſaved."‡ St. Paul, who ſtrenuouſly maintained, that "if righteouſneſs come "by the law, then Chriſt is dead in vain;"§

* Coloſſians ii. 20. † Galatians iv. 9.
‡ Acts xv. 1. § Galatians ii. 21.

thus guarded his converts againſt the falſe doctrines of thoſe inſtructors: "Stand faſt in the "liberty, wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, "and be not entangled again with the yoke of "bondage. Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that "if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you "nothing."* The Apoſtle's reaſoning manifeſtly refers to Jewiſh ordinances, to the ceremonial law of Moſes; and is improperly interpreted to prove that any inſtitution of Chriſt may innocently be diſregarded.

St. Paul's authority is ſtill the more injudiciouſly appealed to, in juſtification of a total diſregard of the Holy Communion, becauſe he gave inſtructions for communicating worthily, and exhorted the diſciples to "examine themſelves, and ſo eat of that bread, and drink of "that cup." The Lord's Supper, or Holy Communion, cannot, therefore, in the intention of St. Paul, be included among thoſe "ordinances," thoſe "weak and beggarly elements," in which he cautioned his converts "not to be "again entangled." The ſervant cannot diſannul the authority of his maſter; St. Paul cannot releaſe us from obedience to Chriſt.

* Galatians v. 1. 2.

It is true, Chriſtians " are not under the law, " but under grace;" yet they are not releaſed from the obligations of the moral law, " the " law written in their hearts;" nor from evangelical duties; nor from obedience to the two Inſtitutions of our Redeemer, ' Baptiſm and the Supper of the Lord.' They cannot indeed too cautiouſly guard againſt ſuperſtition in any ſhape; but they ſhould equally guard againſt diſobedience. Believers are not to account themſelves ſo much above ordinances, or ſo " ſpiritual," as to conclude they are juſtified in deſpiſing the moral law, in rejecting a Chriſtian miniſtry, and in diſcarding every poſitive inſtitution; leſt, through error of judgment, overlooking the authority, they diſobey the will, of " the " Teacher ſent from God."

But, in juſtification of a total diſregard of the Holy Communion, it is moreover contended, that receiving bread and wine can in no wiſe promote the good of the ſoul; and that the Death of Chriſt can be remembered without having recourſe to thoſe elements.

The divine wiſdom, which announces a command, is manifeſtly deſpiſed, when human judgment preſumes thus to queſtion its pro-

priety. Our Lord and Maſter commanded his diſciples to be "baptized with water," and to receive "bread and wine in remembrance of "him." Shall we acknowledge his divine miſſion, and yet object to the fitneſs of his ordinances? Shall we turn away from our Redeemer's injunctions, as Naaman, the haughty Syrian, did from the prophets inſtruction? Is the wilful diſregard of any duty, enjoined by the authority of Chriſt, reconcileable with our relation to him? Will it expreſs the unreſerved and unlimitted ſubjection due to our Prophet, Prieſt, and King? Will it teſtify our deſire of doing "all things, whatſoever He hath com-"manded?"—In labouring to be "ſpiritually "minded," we act "as becometh the Goſpel "of Chriſt;" but not in rejecting as "carnal" his poſitive commands. If we juſtly condemn the Church of Rome for withholding from the people one eſſential part of the Communion, can we, as Proteſtants, ſtand acquitted in our own judgment, in rejecting the whole of our Saviour's inſtitution? If our Lawgiver "had "bid us do ſome great thing, ſhould we not "have done it?" how much rather when he ſaith to us—

"This do in remembrance of Me."

II.—But

II.—But, as there are found among profeſſed Chriſtians, ſome, who object to *any* participation of the Holy Communion; there are, in the *ſecond* place, others—who object to the *Mode* of Communion enjoined in our eſtabliſhed Church.

A poſitive duty cannot be obſerved without adopting ſome mode. Our Communion-ſervice, or Order for the Adminiſtration of the Lord's Supper, is deſigned to illuſtrate the intent of our Lord's original inſtitution, to point out the ſolemnity of the commemoration, and to excite in communicants 'a thankful remembrance 'of his death.' Yet objections are made, by thoſe who ſeparate from the eſtabliſhed Church, to many things introduced into that ſervice.

Some, who imagine no more ſolemnity ſhould be attributed to the communion of the Lord's Supper, than to the enjoyment of their uſual meal, object to making the commemoration *ſerious*.—That objection betrays inattention to theſe words of St. Paul; "The cup of bleſſing, "which we bleſs, is it not the communion of "the blood of Chriſt? The bread, which we "break, is it not the communion of the body "of Chriſt? Have ye not houſes to eat and to "drink

" drink in? or deſpiſe ye the church of God?"* —The ſolemnity introduced into our mode of Communion is ſo far from being objectionable, that it is ſtrictly conſonant with an inſtitution deſigned 'to ſhew the Lord's death,' and to commemorate by the elements of bread and wine his body offered, and his blood ſhed, " for " the remiſſion of ſins."

Others, who do not account one geſture of the human frame more expreſſive of devotion than another, and who never bend the knee in public worſhip, object to our receiving the Communion *kneeling*; and inſinuate that the eſtabliſhed Church requires ſuch a poſture, in token of our adoring the elements of bread and wine: though more than two hundred years have elapſed, ſince the Proteſtation was ſubjoined to our Communion-ſervice, which, purpoſely to diſclaim any ſuch adoration, ſets forth, that—'leſt the ſame kneeling ſhould by 'any perſons, either out of ignorance and in-'firmity, or out of malice and obſtinacy, be 'miſconſtrued and depraved; it is here declared, 'that thereby no adoration is intended, or ought 'to be done, either unto the ſacramental bread

* 1 Corinthians x. 16. and xi. 22.

'or

' or wine, there bodily received, or unto any ' corporal preſence of Chriſts natural fleſh and ' blood.'

One paſſage in the exhortation, uſed at the time of adminiſtering the Holy Communion, by ſome is objected to, as having a tendency to leſſen, rather than increaſe, the number of communicants: on that account it demands a particular examination.

The paſſage is, in ſubſtance, only a repetition of St. Paul's ſentiments on the conſequences of communicating unworthily; and, by rightly underſtanding the ground of thoſe ſentiments, we ſhall beſt remove the objection.

St. Paul was called to the work of the miniſtry after our Lord's aſcenſion. The Goſpel he " neither received of man, neither was he " taught it, but by the revelation of Jeſus " Chriſt."* He " received of the Lord, that " which he alſo delivered" unto his diſciples, " that the Lord Jeſus, the ſame night in which " he was betrayed, took bread; and when he " had given thanks, he brake it, and ſaid,

* Galatians i. 12.

" Take,

" Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken " for you; this do in remembrance of me. " After the ſame manner alſo he took the cup, " when he had ſupped, ſaying, this cup is the " new teſtament in my blood: this do ye, as " oft as ye ſhall drink it, in remembrance of " me."* That inſtitution could not be unimportant which was thus, after our Lord's aſcenſion, revealed to St. Paul; and by him delivered to his diſciples, who did " eat of that " bread, and drink of that cup." In conſequence of ſome irregularities, the Apoſtle took occaſion to add the following ſentiments: " Whoſoever ſhall eat this bread, and drink " this cup of the Lord unworthily, ſhall be " guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let " a man examine himſelf, and ſo let him eat of " that bread, and drink of that cup. For he, " that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth " and drinketh damnation to himſelf, not diſ- " cerning the Lord's body."† The irregularities condemned in this paſſage ſeem to have ariſen from the abuſe of the mode in which the Corinthian diſciples celebrated the Communion, " when one was hungry, and another was " drunken."—Our Order for the Adminiſtration

* 1 Corinthians xi. 23—25. † 1 Corinthians xi. 27—29.

of

of the Lord's Supper, in precluding the poſſibility of ſuch irregularity, removes all apprehenſion of communicating unworthily on that ground: ſtill the ſubſtance of the Apoſtle's admonition is introduced into our exhortation, with the pious deſign of impreſſing on the mind the neceſſity of ſelf-examination, and the ſolemnity of that commemoration, which "ſhews the Lord's "death till he come." Nor would it, on the whole, be eaſy to produce a mode of Communion, better adapted, either to illuſtrate the intent of our Lord's inſtitution; or to fill the heart of the communicant with the moſt grateful ſenſe of the Mercy and Love of Chriſt.

III.—But, as among thoſe, who profeſs to reverence the name and authority of Chriſt, ſome object to *any* participation of the Holy Communion, and others to the *Mode* of Communion enjoined in our eſtabliſhed Church; ſo, there are, in the *third* place, others who object—to the interference of the Legiſlature in requiring a compliance with that mode in thoſe, who are to be entruſted with power under Government.

The objections, uſually advanced on that ground, call in queſtion—both the juſtice of the Legiſlature's propoſing terms of qualification; and

and the propriety of applying an act of religion, and in particular the Holy Communion, to anſwer a ſecular purpoſe.

It cannot be unjuſt for the Legiſlature to propoſe terms of Qualification for admiſſion into offices of truſt and power, becauſe the end of Government is general Security.

If it be urged, that in exercifing ſuch authority, the Legiſlature infringes on 'the natural rights 'of man;' it muſt be remembered, that, as civil ſociety wiſely infringes on many rights, which might might have full ſcope in a ſtate of nature, no individual member of ſociety has, or can have, a natural right to offices of truſt and power.

In a ſtate of nature (if any ſuch there be) the individual is ſubject to no controul, amenable to no temporal tribunal; but is at once the judge and the avenger of his own cauſe. In civil ſociety every individual gives up a portion of his natural liberty in being ſubject to legal controul, and in having judgment and redreſs determined by legal inveſtigation. All exiſting Governments require ſome explicit teſtimony of good affection in thoſe, to whom, for the ſafety of

of the State, power and the adminiſtration of juſtice are entruſted: nor can any member of ſociety in truth account himſelf treated with injuſtice, if the impediment to his accepting offices of truſt and power reſt entirely with himſelf.

But, though the end of government, general Security, may juſtify the Legiſlature in requiring ſome Qualification, or Teſt, of thoſe, who deſire to be inveſted with authority; yet an objection is made to the propriety of a religious teſt, grounded on this principle, that Government has no concern with Religion.—If Government were really to have no concern with Religion, the want of that care would ſoon totally ſubvert Government. There has never yet exiſted, in heathen or chriſtian empires, a legiſlature without upholding and protecting ſome principles of religion. The Chriſtian Religion forms an eſſential part of the laws of our land :[1] The Church of England is one branch of the Conſtitution; and the Legiſlature had in view the ſecurity of the *whole* in paſſing the Cor-

[1] 'Chriſtianity is part of the laws of England.'
BLACKSTONE.

poration

poration and Teſt Acts;[1] for, knowing, that whoever in his conſcience was perſuaded, that a foreign Potentate ought in this nation to exerciſe ſupreme authority in all cauſes, eccleſiaſtical as well as civil, he, if he acted conſiſtently, and were poſſeſſed of ſufficient power, would gladly re-unite theſe kingdoms to the triple crown; knowing likewiſe, that whoever in his conſcience was perſuaded, either in civil matters, that the regal authority and hereditary nobility ought to be extirpated, and the republican form, or levelling ſyſtem,[2] to prevail in this kingdom; or, that in ſacred matters, a a national Eſtabliſhment of Religion, under the regular orders of Biſhops, Prieſts, and Deacons, is ſinful, antichriſtian, and idolatrous, he would endeavour openly to ſubvert, or clandeſtinely to undermine,

[1] 'In order the better to ſecure the Eſtabliſhed Church 'againſt perils from non-conformiſts of all denominations, 'Infidels, Turks, Jews, Papiſts, and Sectaries, there are 'two Bulwarks erected; called, the *Corporation* and *Teſt* 'Acts.' BLACKSTONE.

[2] 'There was at this time (1647) a new faction grown up 'in the army, which were, either by their own denomination, 'or with their own conſent, called *Levellers*; who declared, '"that all degrees of men ſhould be levelled, and an *Equality* '"ſhould be eſtabliſhed both in Titles and Eſtates, through-'"out the kingdoms."

CLARENDON'S HISTORY OF THE REBELLION.

undermine, what his conſcience thus reprobated; the Britiſh Legiſlature, taking theſe points into mature conſideration, provided, by the Corporation and Teſt Acts, that civil and military power ſhould not indiſcriminately be obtained; nor, after what had then recently and ſeverely been experienced, the Conſtitution in Church and State be again ſubverted, and its friends and advocates perſecuted.

Attention to general ſecurity, expedience, common prudence, and inſtruction from woful experience, juſtified the requiring an explicit and ſolemn teſtimony of good affection in thoſe entruſted with the peace and ſafety of the nation.

But, admitting the juſtice of the Legiſlature's requiring ſome ſolemn teſtimony of good affection to the Conſtitution, ſtill it is repreſented as highly improper, that the ſacred inſtitution, juſt conſidered, ſhould be applied to anſwer any ſecular purpoſe.—Receiving the Communion, as required by law, is improperly called '*the* '*Qualification.*' Good affection to our national Eſtabliſhment of Religion is with reaſon expected in thoſe, to whom the preſervation of the Conſtitution, in any degree, is entruſted;

and is, in fact, the Qualification which the Law means to require: of that Qualification, the receiving of the Communion, according to the rites of the Eſtabliſhed Church, is conſidered as the Teſt and Evidence: the Legiſlature preſuming, that they, who communicate with the Church in its higheſt and moſt ſacred ordinance, are perſons, who cannot be led by any real diſaffection to it, to ſeek its Deſtruction. — And ſurely the communicant may faithfully diſcharge his Chriſtian duty in "eating of that bread, "and drinking of that cup;" may, with the proper diſpoſition of mind, receive the Communion according to the rites of our Church, though he is to fill ſome place of truſt, or to diſcharge the honourable, yet arduous, duties of the Magiſtrate.—If any one is conſcious to himſelf of the beſt motives and intentions in coming to "the Lord's Supper," let him not be diſcouraged, either by the erroneous judgment of thoſe, who object to *any* participation of the Holy Communion; or by the prejudices of thoſe, who, averſe to a national Eſtabliſhment of Religion, object to *our Mode* of Communion. — The man, who lives in the commiſſion of any known ſin and iniquity, or who harbours unrelenting thoughts and injurious intentions,

intentions, is, in every ſenſe, and on every ground, unworthy to commemorate that Love, which induced the Son of God to leave the Throne of his eternal Glory, on purpoſe that He might " redeem us from all iniquity, and " purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous " of good works."*

To conclude.—If it ſhould, in the laſt place, be objected, that, conſidering the infirmity and imperfection of our nature, no mortal can worthily communicate; that objection would effectually fruſtrate our Lord's command, and for ever preclude human beings from " ſhewing " his death, in eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup, in remembrance of him." But, whoſoever cometh unto God in faith and in repentance, " He will in no wiſe caſt out." God will accept our ſincere, though, in too many reſpects, imperfect ſervices; not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Therefore " let " a man examine himſelf:"—that Duty is indiſpenſable:—and, by the wiſdom and piety of the Church, *they*, who come to the Lord's Supper, are required—' to examine themſelves, ' whether they repent them truly of their for-

* Titus ii. 14.

'mer ſins; ſtedfaſtly purpoſing to lead a new 'life; to have a lively faith in God's mercy 'through Chriſt, with a thankful remembrance 'of his death, and to be in charity with all 'men.'

To God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, be aſcribed, as is moſt juſtly due, all honour, praiſe, might, majeſty, and dominion, now, henceforth, and for evermore. AMEN.

ON SETTING GOD BEFORE US.

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

ON

SUNDAY, THE TWENTY-SIXTH OF JANUARY, 1794,

BEING THE

First Sunday in Hilary Term.

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

ON

THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT, 1854.

BEING THE

First Sunday in Trinity Term.

SERMON II.

PSALM XVI. PART OF THE NINTH VERSE.

I HAVE SET GOD ALWAYS BEFORE ME.

THE exiſtence of God is one of thoſe truths, which we admit as ſoon as we are capable of reaſoning: no good mind ever denied it, nor can the idea be totally extirpated even from the worſt mind. Whether we "conſider the "heavens, the ſun, the moon, and the ſtars;" whether we ſurvey the inanimate, the animate, or rational parts of creation; wherever we direct our enquiries, all nature "declares the glory of "God." The wiſdom diſplayed in the works of creation, even in the moſt minute and ſeemingly inſignificant; the power exerted in the preſervation of all things, render the exiſtence of God an undeniable certainty.

We read not of any nation, however rude and uncivilized, which has not adopted religious rites and ceremonies. Where the powers of the mind have been cultivated, reaſon has ſuggeſted noble ideas of the firſt great Cauſe: and, under the Moſaic and Chriſtian diſpenſations, which confirm the belief of the divine exiſtence, the moſt ſublime ſentiments have prevailed, and have been accompanied with holineſs of life. The knowledge of this firſt truth ſeems indeed to be vouchſafed unto us, not ſo much to employ our underſtanding on ſpeculations, which are endleſs, as to influence our conduct, and make us wiſe to the beſt and greateſt purpoſe, even "wiſe unto ſalvation."

In this view I mean, *firſt*, to conſider the principle contained in the text; and, *ſecondly*, to point out the benefits reſulting from a firm adherence to that principle.

I.—To the real nature and eſſence of objects continually before our eyes we are utter ſtrangers, and ſhould in vain perplex our minds to inveſtigate all their properties; yet thoſe objects adminiſter to our neceſſities and comfortable ſubſiſtence. In like manner, though our knowledge of God is limited and imperfect; though

in contemplating his works we may with truth exclaim, "Lo! these are parts of his ways! "but how little a portion is heard of him!"* yet the moral and religious application of our knowledge will best promote our temporal and eternal peace. Whenever we attempt to comprehend the perfections of God, the more we reflect, the more we are lost in wonder. We can form no adequate idea of his real nature, or the manner of his existence: "No heart can "think upon these things worthily:" "such "knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for "us, we cannot attain unto it."†

The Scriptures contain the most exalted descriptions of the divine attributes: they teach us, that God is the creator, preserver, and governor of all things; that he is eternal, omniscient, omnipresent; that he is infinite in power and wisdom, in truth and holiness, in goodness and in mercy. But, when they have set forth his glory under the sublimest ideas, which language can convey, or our understanding admit, still they declare God to be incomprehensible: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst "thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"‡

* Job xxvi. 14. † Psalm cxxxix. 5. ‡ Job xi. 7.

" O, the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom " and knowledge of God! how unſearchable " are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding " out!"*

To what uſes then are we to apply our degree of knowledge? are we to devote our minds wholly to abſtract enquiries? or does it derogate from our underſtanding to admit any point as the object of faith, which is not likewiſe the ſubject of our comprehenſion? We ſurely cannot err in applying our knowledge of God to the moral purpoſe of regulating our thoughts, words, and actions. For inſtance:

We believe that 'God is preſent every where.' " Is he a God at hand, and not a God afar off?"† " Doth he not fill heaven and earth? the hea- " ven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain " him."‡ Should we be unwilling to admit theſe ſacred truths, 'till we can comprehend in what mode God is univerſally preſent, through the infinity of ſpace and through the ages of eternity; or, in what manner God " filleth heaven and " earth;" our mind, unequal to the contemplation, would ſuggeſt various imaginations, and

* Rom. xi. 33. † Jer. xxiii. 23. ‡ 1 Kings viii. 27.

every

every ſuggeſtion would bring with it inſurmountable difficulties. But, if we are willing to make a moral application of this truth, that 'God is preſent every where,' we ſhall find it a ſtrong encouragement to do good, and a powerful reſtraint from evil.

We believe that God knoweth all things, paſt, preſent, and to come. "Known unto "God are all his works from the beginning of the "world.*" "He declareth the end from the "beginning, and from ancient times the things "that are not yet done."† The certainty of the divine omniſcience has induced ſome perſons to deny the moral freedom of our actions; while others, in defence of our freedom, have called in queſtion that omniſcience. Allowing it may be difficult, perhaps impoſſible, for us to diſcover that medium, which reconciles the omniſcience of God and the liberty of man, yet it ſhould never be concluded from our conceptions of that divine perfection, that human beings are irreſiſtibly impelled to the commiſſion of evil. The ſcriptures maintain both the omniſcience of God and the moral freedom of our actions: they repreſent us as ultimately reſponſible to God; and they inſtruct us to meditate on his omniſcience

* Acts xv. 18. † Iſaiah xlvi. 10.

in

in a religious point of view: and whenever we make ſuch application of 'God's knowing all 'things,' we ſhall find it (as in the former inſtance) a ſtrong encouragement to do good, and a powerful reſtraint from evil.

We may, in like manner, derive ſolid improvement from our belief in the Juſtice and Mercy of God. The contemplation of his juſtice would fill our hearts with diſmay, and lead ſuch imperfect creatures as we are, almoſt to deſpondency, were we not ſupported and comforted by belief in his mercy. But, in vain ſhould we have attempted to reconcile juſtice and mercy, unleſs we had been bleſt with "the "word of reconciliation," unleſs we had known the revelation of the Goſpel: in that diſpenſation "mercy and truth are met together; "righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed each "other."* The awful attribute of Juſtice is there diſplayed to deter us from offending, and infinite Mercy is there ſet before us, to lead us to repentance, and enliven our "faith, hope, and "charity."

II.—From theſe reflections on the principle contained in the text, I now proceed, in the

* Pſalm lxxxv. 10.

ſecond

ſecond place, to conſider more particularly the benefits reſulting from a firm adherence to that principle.

If we "ſet God before us," we ſhall not be deficient in rendering unto him the honour due unto his holy name: we ſhall not neglect that public worſhip, which reaſon dictates, and revelation ſanctifies; and that "reaſonable ſervice" we ſhall perform, not for the appearance, not from worldly motives, but becauſe we account it our higheſt privilege to praiſe and honour him, "who liveth for ever "and ever." If this principle bring us to the houſe of God, it will ſecure us, while we are there, from inattention and apparent want of devotion, by reminding us for what glorious end we are aſſembled, and in whoſe more immediate preſence. It will moreover ſtrengthen our minds in acts of private devotion; will direct us (in the ſpirit of the Goſpel) to "enter into "our cloſet, and in ſecret worſhip him, who "ſeeth in ſecret."*

The regular diſcharge of theſe ſacred duties will indicate that God is in our thoughts; but will not complete the whole of our duty.

* Matthew vi. 6.

The

The benefits reſulting from an awful ſenſe of the divine omniſcience, will moreover appear in its animating us to diſcharge every moral and ſocial duty. In "ſetting God before us," we are to imitate, as much as our nature will admit, his faithfulneſs and truth, his mercy and goodneſs.

If it be poſſible for any human being entirely to diſcard that principle, no reſtraint can be laid on his actions, but that which ſhall ariſe either from attention to preſent emolument, or from the apprehenſion of ſuffering the penalties annexed to the laws of civil ſociety: how inadequate thoſe ſanctions only muſt prove to ſecure obedience to moral and ſocial obligations, every good mind is intuitively certain, and every corrupt mind knows by experience. Can then any one "ſet God before him," and injure his neighbour in his perſon, fortune, or reputation? Can the love of God reſide in the heart, and at the ſame time the hatred of man? Can the ſenſe of God's truth and faithfulneſs, long-ſuffering goodneſs and mercy abide, where inſincerity and perfidy, malevolence and cruelty abound? "What fellowſhip hath righteouſneſs with un-"righteouſneſs? and what communion hath "light with darkneſs?"* The love of God ſo

* 2 Corinthians vi. 14.

abſolutely

abſolutely involves the love of our neighbour, that "if a man ſay, I love God, and hateth his "brother, he is a lyar."* By "ſetting God "before us," we ſhould greatly counteract, if not remove, the falſe bias caſt upon our judgment by objects of ſenſe; we ſhould learn to act and converſe more like the ſons of the Univerſal Parent; we ſhould be inclined to prefer the love of truth to temporal intereſt, and integrity to all the glories of the world; much leſs ſhould we harbour in our hearts malicious and revengeful deſigns, while, not more for our admiration than imitation, "the goodneſs of God endureth yet "daily."†

Influenced by theſe conſiderations, we ſhall moreover be taught (if I may ſo ſpeak) to fear our own cenſure, more than the cenſure of the whole world; and to cultivate purity of heart, as the moſt acceptable ſervice to God, who "is "of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." To what an aſtoniſhing degree are men of corrupt minds ſelf-deluded, when they are only anxious that their evil deeds ſhall here be undiſcovered! whither will that deluſion lead? it will lead them to break through the reſtraints of conſcience, the ties of nature, and the bands of ſociety.

* 1 John iv. 20. † Pſalm lii. 2.

But

But though ſinful actions could for ever be unknown to others, can we forget them ourſelves? Can we hide them from God? What a mind muſt that be, which receives a ſatisfaction in the idea that its evil deeds may be concealed from human knowledge, and is not confounded by the certainty that God knows them! What a mind muſt that be, which thus feareth man, and hath no fear of God! "Who art thou, that "thou ſhouldeſt be afraid of a man that ſhall "die, and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker?*" The prophetic ſpirit has denounced, "Wo "unto them that ſeek deep to hide their coun-"ſel from the Lord, and their works are in the "dark, and they ſay, who ſeeth us, and who "knoweth us?"†

They, who *can* diſregard the omniſcience of God, have parted with the only effectual reſtraint from evil: that reſtraint being diſcarded, no limits can be ſet to the corruption of their thoughts, to the ſinfulneſs of their actions, and to the miſery they may inflict on others. But their condemnation dwells with them; it is ever preſent to their minds: they may labour to ſuppreſs the remonſtrances of conſcience and to

* Iſaiah li. 12. 13. † Iſaiah xxix. 15.

divert

divert their thoughts by a ſucceſſion of vain amuſements, but that is not peace of mind: "there is no peace, ſaith God, to the wicked:"* exiſtence is a burthen to them, and they die without hope. If ſuch be the preſent reward of unrighteouſneſs, with what diligence ſhould we keep our heart! if ſecurity and conſolation are to be found in "ſetting God before us," conſcience itſelf ſuggeſts a firm adherence to that principle: for what a check muſt it prove even to the thought of evil! what encouragement muſt it afford in the purſuit of every laudable deſign, and what comfort in the hour of diſtreſs! The ſatisfaction experienced in the preſent life, by thoſe, who preſerve in their hearts, and manifeſt in their actions, a continual regard to the divine omnipreſence, infinitely overbalances all the troubles and mortifications they meet with; while the contemplation of future bleſſedneſs alleviates their ſorrows, confirms their hopes, and gives them "peace in believing" in him, who is "the rewarder of them that diligently "ſeek him."

If therefore a well-grounded hope of acceptance with God is eſſential to our peace of mind,

* Iſaiah lvii. 21.

if eternity is of more importance than time, and the favour of God more valuable than the friendſhip of the world; we are bound, by every conſideration which can influence our hopes and our fears, by the mercy of God in Chriſt, and by the expectation of his righteous judgment in the laſt great day, to "ſet God always before us." Actuated by that principle, we ſhall be enabled to ſay in peace as in truth, "Thou, O Lord, "art about my path, and about my bed, and "ſpieſt out all my ways. Whom have I heaven "but thee? and there is none upon earth, that "I deſire in compariſon of thee: Thou wilt "ſhew me the path of life; in thy preſence is "the fulneſs of joy, and at thy right hand there "are pleaſures for evermore."

ON THE FAST DAY.

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,

THE

ALDERMEN, SHERIFFS,

AND

CITY OFFICERS,

ON

FRIDAY, THE TWENTY-EIGHTH OF FEBRUARY, 1794,

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED

BY HIS MAJESTY

To be observed as a General Fast.

SERMON III.

ISAIAH, CHAP. XXVI. PART OF THE NINTH VERSE.

WHEN THY JUDGMENTS ARE IN THE EARTH, THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD WILL LEARN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THOUGH the "Heavens declare the glory "of God, and the firmament ſheweth his handy "work," yet that continued manifeſtation of divine power and wiſdom does not fill the hearts of men with praiſe and gratitude. The ſun ſhines bright in the firmament; the moon performs her appointed revolutions; "ſeed-time "and harveſt, ſummer and winter, day and "night, do not ceaſe.—"O that men would "therefore praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs; "and declare the wonders that he doeth for the "children of men!"—Were the ſun for one day not to finiſh his courſe, with what aſtoniſhment would our hearts be filled! with what amazement ſhould we contemplate ſuch a mar-

vellous act of divine power! but is the manifeſtation of divine power leſs marvellous, which cauſes that "great light," day by day, ages after ages, to diſpenſe unto us bleſſings?

The Globe we inhabit is replete with wonders—"the Earth is full of the goodneſs of the "Lord"—but, becauſe thoſe wonders preſent themſelves on every ſide, we forget to render unto God "the honour due unto his holy name."

The numberleſs mercies of God are deſigned to lead and preſerve us in the way of righteouſneſs: our neglect and frequent abuſe of thoſe mercies render "judgments" moſt expedient for us: they are indeed repreſented in Scripture as God's "ſtrange work," that in which he delighteth not; but infinitely beneficial will they prove, if from his judgments *now* in the earth, "the inhabitants of the world will learn "righteouſneſs."—

It will not, I truſt, be either foreign from the general argument in the text, or inapplicable to the ſolemnity of this day, if—in the *firſt* place, I direct your attention to ſome inſtances of the *Want* of righteouſneſs obſervable among ourſelves; and—*ſecondly*, from the miſerable example

example of our preſent continental foes, urge the neceſſity of "learning righteouſneſs," leſt, in our nation and perſons, we experience the juſt judgments of God.—

I.—Without detracting, on the one hand, from the commendation due in private life to the many examples, in which a juſt ſenſe of duty is diſplayed in correſpondent acts of virtue; and in public life to the numerous inſtances, which teſtify unrivalled benevolence and charity; without intending, on the other hand, to overcharge the deſcription of our tranſgreſſions, or preſuming to aſcertain the meaſure of our offences; yet, on contemplating our preſent national character in a moral and religious light, we muſt confeſs there is abundant reaſon to humble our ſouls before God; to deprecate his judgments; and in contrition to acknowledge, that, as a nation, God has hitherto "puniſhed "us leſs than our iniquities deſerve."—

Should any individual be ſo little acquainted with his own heart, as to imagine, that, being not "far from righteouſneſs," he has no need to deprecate the divine judgment; let him, in the cool moments of reflection, after examining the perfect rule of life ſet before him, conſider

the deviations in his paſt conduct with all their aggravating circumſtances; and, on applying to himſelf this awful queſtion, "How much oweſt "*thou* unto my Lord?" the ſtill ſmall voice of conſcience will ſuggeſt—"thou art weighed in "the balances, and art found wanting."—

In the riſing generation we behold an attachment to frivolous purſuits, an averſion to reaſonable reſtraint, an indifference to the judgment of ſuperiors, an immoderate love of pleaſure—diſpoſitions unfavourable to the cauſe of truth, virtue, and religion; and the more ſo, when moral obligations are conſidered only as ſubſervient to convenience, and natural and revealed religion are treated, as if unbelievers had demonſtrated both to be falſe.

Among thoſe perſons, whoſe ſituation in life, being removed from the evils and temptations attendant on the extreme either of poverty or riches, is the moſt favourable to happineſs, becauſe moſt favourable to virtue, there is found a miſplaced ambition of copying licentious manners, and adopting irreligious ſentiments; apparent in their profaning the Sabbath, abſenting themſelves from public worſhip, remaining ignorant

norant of the Scriptures, and diſregarding the religion of the bleſſed Jeſus.

While we lament the evils, which originate with the moſt profligate of the people, and, by extending their baneful influence, induce, not merely the moſt diſtreſſed of the poor, but (as our courts of juſtice now more than ever atteſt) perſons entruſted with property, confidential dependants, "to ſteal, and take God's holy "name in vain;" is it not likewiſe dreadful to reflect, that, in the higher ranks of ſociety, among thoſe who know, or have every means of knowing, "the way of God more perfectly," there are numbers, who "have altogether broken "the yoke, and burſt the bonds;" who are diſtinguiſhed for poiſoning the ſources of public ſpirit and of domeſtic happineſs by GAMING, DUELLING, and ADULTERY; "glorying in their "ſhame," diſavowing reſponſibility, and ſaying in their hearts, "Who is the Lord that we "ſhould fear him?"

When folly and profaneneſs, fraud and injuſtice, vice and infidelity, are thus predominant, I cannot flatter you that our national guilt is not already ſufficient to draw down upon us any judgment of God.—Can we ſeriouſly reflect

on

on theſe things without a real concern for our own nation? Can we feel that concern without deprecating the judgments of God? For, if it be the unavoidable conſequence of immorality and contempt of religion to weaken and diſſolve the bands of ſociety, let us not ſo groſsly flatter ourſelves, as to imagine that our condition is ſecure; or, that the Almighty, though "rich in mercy," will protect and preſerve thoſe, who perſiſt in violating his commands, in rejecting his word and ordinances, and in abuſing his mercy and loving kindneſs.—

II.—If, from theſe inſtances of the *Want* of righteouſneſs obſervable among ourſelves, I now, in the *ſecond* place, advert to the national character of our preſent continental foes, it will be done ſolely with this deſign, that, in being warned by their miſerable example, "calling "our own ways to remembrance, and learning "righteouſneſs," we may not in our own nation and perſons experience the juſt judgment of God.—

We are now involved in a war, in all its circumſtances, probably, never yet paralleled. In juſtification

juſtification of our part in the preſent continental war, it is pleaded, and with truth—that we are not the aggreſſors—that we act on the defenſive—that our enemies wage war againſt order, ſociety, and religion—and that our own preſervation and exiſtence, as a free, civilized, and Chriſtian people, turns on reſtraining their unbounded ambition.

To the introduction of the miſeries now endured by our enemies in France, the principles of their philoſophical inſtructors, and the opinions of their political leaders, have largely contributed.

Their philoſophers have long been induſtrious to deprive the mind of the *Hope* of immortality: they have exerted uncommon talents to "rob us "of the earneſt expectation of the creature," and leave us to drink the dregs of the cup of human miſery, without any conſolation to ſuſtain our ſpirit: they have aſſumed the character of lovers of human nature, while they repreſented the grave as the eternal ſleep of body and ſoul; and of friends to truth, while they ridiculed the belief, and denied the exiſtence, of GOD.—Wretched is that ſyſtem of philoſophy, "falſely "ſo called," which tends to deſpoil good men of

of their deareſt hopes, and to free the abandoned from the apprehenſion of a "judgment to come!"—Deſpicable is the underſtanding, which imagines that ſocial enjoyment is to be heightened by levelling us with the beaſts who periſh—that our true and proper happineſs conſiſts in "corrupting ourſelves in thoſe things, which we "know naturally"—and that, by deſpiſing religion, we ſhall advance the freedom and perfection of our nature! Theſe licentious ſuggeſtions ſhew what abſurdities, what debaſing ſentiments, what incoherent and atheiſtical opinions, men, even of cultivated and brilliant genius, will adopt, when, loſt in imaginary independence, they account themſelves too *great* to be good, and too *wiſe* to be religious.

They, whoſe minds are not yet perverted by infidelity, will therefore continue thinking it moſt expedient to walk in the "good old "paths;" and to "train up their children," in the *fear*, not in the *denial*, of God. They will guard againſt the contagion of foreign philoſophy: a ſyſtem of the moſt unſound poſitions, which have ever diſgraced the underſtanding, and polluted the heart, of man; a ſyſtem, which, in attempting to exclude "the fear of "God," rends aſunder all the duties, all the charities,

charities, all the comfort of life; deſtroys moral ſentiment, and eradicates natural affection.—

When, together with ſuch philoſophical principles, the opinions of their political leaders on 'the abſtract and impreſcriptible 'Rights of Man' were generally diffuſed, it is the leſs to be wondered at, that the people of France, allured by the more intelligible promiſes of 'Liberty and Equality,' ſhould avail themſelves of their own ſtrength: and, after exhibiting in their own nation dreadful inſtances of their ſovereign power, ſhould hold forth to ſurrounding nations the offer of the ſame 'Liberty and Equality;' or threaten them with all the horrors of war and deſolation.[1]

They now feel, and the whole nation for ages to come will moſt ſeverely feel, the direful conſequences of rebellion againſt the laws of God and man.—Let the miſeries now exiſting in that

[1] Declaration of the National Convention of France—

'That it will treat as enemies the people, who, refuſing 'or renouncing Liberty and Equality, are deſirous of pre-'ſerving their Prince and privileged caſts, or of entering 'into an accommodation with them.'

The EXAMPLE of FRANCE, a WARNING to BRITAIN. By ARTHUR YOUNG. Page 152, 3d Edit. 1793.

kingdom,

kingdom, teach us (if we have need to be taught) the value of peace and order, of virtue and religion—Let the alienation of mind in ſo many millions of the inhabitants from all ſenſe of allegiance; from the ties of conſcience, and the ſanctions of religion—Let their ferocity, which has already filled an extenſive empire with internal deſolation, has led to the plunder and deſtruction of immenſe property; to the perpetration of acts diſgraceful to the moſt ſavage tribes; of every indecency and barbarity which could be exerciſed on the feelings and lives of their fellow citizens, their legal magiſtrates, their ſpiritual inſtructors, and their gracious Sovereign—Let the madneſs, which, to fill up "the meaſure of their iniquity," has induced them to convert to heatheniſh ſuperſtition temples dedicated to the worſhip of God; to "deny the Lord who bought them;" to blaſpheme the Saviour of the world, and to defy the power of God:—Let theſe dreadful effects of anarchy prove to us BRITONS ſo many admonitions not to trifle with lawful authority; not "to deſpiſe government;" not to endanger the civil and religious bleſſings we now enjoy.

Thoſe bleſſings for many generations have been well underſtood, and largely experienced, in

in this nation: they are the fruits of the united wiſdom of ages: they were obtained by the labours, and purchaſed by the lives, of our illuſtrious forefathers. The poſſeſſion of that *Inheritance* ſhould prevail with every honeſt member of the community, every lover of his country, every friend to God and man, to prevent, as far as lies in his power, the diffuſion of thoſe ſentiments, which tend to deſtroy property,[1] ſubvert religion, and introduce anarchy and deſolation. For it is too notorious to be denied —that our foreign adverſaries have their advocates here—that "from among ourſelves have "ariſen men ſpeaking perverſe" and moſt ſeditious things; that, of our own nation there are numbers, who, from rooted averſion to it's conſtitution in Church and State, would not be grieved at the annihilation of both: numbers, eager to adopt the 'Levelling

[1] 'The quarrel now raging in that once flouriſhing kingdom *(France)* is not between liberty and tyranny, or 'between protecting and oppreſſing ſyſtems of government; 'it is, on the contrary, collected to a ſingle point—it is 'alone a queſtion of *Property;* it is a trial at arms, whether 'thoſe who have *nothing*, ſhall not ſeize and poſſeſs the pro'perty of thoſe who have *ſomething*. A dreadful queſtion— 'a horrid ſtruggle, which can never end but in the equal and 'univerſal ruin of all.'—

Id. Page 46.

Syſtem,'

Syſtem,' in theory ſo plauſibly delineated here, as to conceal the evils experimentally felt abroad: numbers, in whom there exiſts a ſtrong diſpoſition to enforce 'the ſacred right (as it is called) of inſurrection.'

The Liberty, now too generally purſued, is founded on this frantic idea—exemption from all reſtraint and authority—from the laws of man—and from the fear of God. But, though that liberty were as univerſal as it is deſtructive, to glory in it will ever be among the ſigns of "a "reprobate mind." It is no honour to a man to be merely leſs unprincipled than his neighbour: it is no credit to a nation to be only not ſo abandoned as another.

We ought ſeriouſly to reflect, that, though under the ſanction of Government, we now, individually and collectively, experience the protection of our perſons, the ſecurity of property,[1] and the eſtabliſhment of religion; yet thoſe

[1] 'Let the Farmers of this kingdom repreſent to themſelves a picture of what their ſituation would be, if their labourers, their ſervants, and the paupers, whom they ſupport by poor's rates, were all armed, and, in ſome meaſure, regimented, and in poſſeſſion of the veſtry, voting not only the money to be raiſed by rates, but the diviſion

'of

thoſe invaluable bleſſings could not exiſt, if lawful authority were violently overborne. It is therefore incumbent on us all, as we value life, property, and religion, to guard againſt the avowed diſturbers of ſociety.

We are not to preſume on our *preſent* diſtance from the actual horrors of war: nor to confide either on the juſtice of our cauſe, or on the approved valour of the combined armies; nor haſtily conclude, that the troubles in Europe will ſpeedily be terminated: for, ſo great are the numbers and the enthuſiaſm of our open enemies—ſo deep the ſubtlety of our clandeſtine foes—ſuch the nature of the abſtract principles, which have, in a great meaſure, given birth to the preſent troubles—and, ſuch are "the ſigns "of the times"—that no human mind can form a judgment of the conſequences.

War is, in itſelf, a dreadful alternative. Although victory ſhould attend that nation,

'of it among themſelves; decreeing what the price of all the 'farmers' products ſhould be, what wages ſhould be paid to 'ſervants, and what pay to labourers. Under ſuch a ſyſtem 'of government, I beg to aſk, what ſecurity would remain for 'a ſingle ſhilling in the pockets of thoſe, who are at preſent 'in a ſtate of eaſe and affluence?'

Id. Page 37.

whoſe cauſe is juſt, yet to both nations—war is one of God's judgments. Before that mark of the divine diſpleaſure is experienced, inferior warnings muſt have been repeatedly reſiſted. National judgments are dreadful in the extreme. To every individual they bring diſtreſs and miſery. " When a man's foes are thoſe of his own " houſehold," when civil diſcord reigns, imagination cannot paint the dreadful apprehenſions; words cannot deſcribe the univerſal conſternation and horror: for there is no " compaſſion— " upon young man or maiden; old man or him " that ſtoopeth for age:"* " they, that have " fed delicately, are deſolate in the ſtreets: they, " that were brought up in ſcarlet, embrace dung- " hills: the young children aſk for bread; and " the tongue of the ſucking child cleaveth to " the roof of his mouth for thirſt!"†

We have this day offered up our prayers and ſupplications to the Divine Majeſty, ' for ' averting thoſe heavy judgments which our ma- ' nifold provocations have moſt juſtly deſerved.'

But we ſhall beſt anſwer the intent of this day's ſolemnity, and beſt prove our ſincerity, by

* 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 17. † Lamentations iv.

" ſetting

" ſetting God *always* before us:" ſhewing in our own conduct an example of righteouſneſs; in ſecular concerns manifeſting a ſpirit of integrity, good-will, and charity; diſcharging the public and private duties of religion; and training up thoſe committed to our care, whoſe ſalvation *ought* to be dear unto us, " in the fear " of God."

To the rebellious inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, who ſaid to the prophets, " propheſy not unto " us right things, ſpeak unto us ſmooth things, " propheſy deceits, cauſe the Holy One of *Iſrael* " to ceaſe from before us," *Iſaiah* was commiſſioned to deliver theſe words: " To what " purpoſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto " me? ſaith the Lord: bring no more vain " oblations: put away the evil of your doings " from before mine eyes: ceaſe to do evil; learn " to do well." And can we, who are bleſt with the knowledge of the Goſpel, imagine that God will accept any homage inſtead of the ſacrifice of our hearts? Can we, to whom are revealed the ineſtimable love of God, in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt—the certainty of future exiſtence—and " of a judgment to come," look for protection from heaven, while we diſhonour the " doctrine

" of God our Saviour," by an unholy life and converſation? Therefore " cleanſe your " hands, ye ſinners, and purify your hearts, ye " double minded: rent your hearts and not your " garments: caſt away from you all your tranſ- " greſſions, ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruin."

It may be *too late* to cry for *mercy*, when *judgment* is come. " Before the evil days " come," may we all " learn righteouſneſs!" —May it pleaſe God to ſpare all thoſe who confeſs his holy name!—May peace, ſafety, and proſperity, be reſtored and perpetuated to our Sovereign and his kingdoms! and may the Grace of God enable us to " know the things " that belong to our *everlaſting* peace—before " they are hid from our eyes."

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. AMEN.

ON EQUALITY.

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,

THE

JUDGES,

ALDERMEN, SERJEANTS AT LAW,

SHERIFFS,

AND

CITY OFFICERS,

ON

SUNDAY, THE ELEVENTH OF MAY, 1794,

BEING THE

First Sunday in Easter Term.

SERMON IV.

PSALM XLIX. VERSE 2.

HIGH AND LOW, RICH AND POOR, ONE WITH ANOTHER.

THE text expreſſes, in few but comprehenſive words, that inequality, which always has exiſted, and moſt probably to the end of this world will exiſt, in the external circumſtances of human beings. The records of profane hiſtory are one continued atteſtation of that inequality; and the ſacred writings do not authorize us to look for any other view of human condition. And yet, by ſome writers, that inequality has been repreſented as an evil, which ſhould univerſally be removed; and has been urged as an argument againſt the providence of God.

In the following diſcourſe, I ſhall endeavour to eſtabliſh this general propoſition—that the

exiſtence of " high and low, rich and poor," obſervable in all nations, throughout all ages, ſhould not be repreſented as an evil, which ought univerſally to be removed; but ſhould rather be conſidered as forming one branch of God's moral government over beings placed in a ſtate of probation.

To illuſtrate this propoſition, I mean, in the *firſt* place to point out—that the exiſtence of " high and low, rich and poor," is not prohibited in the two authentic teſtimonies of the divine will, the Moſaic and Chriſtian Covenants: and, in the *ſecond* place ſhall conſider—that the inequality obſervable in human condition, proceeds, in a great degree, from the circumſtances of our nature.—

I.—In the Moſaic and Chriſtian Covenants human beings are repreſented as in a ſtate of probation, dependent on the providence of God. In both revelations general and ſpecial inſtructions are given for the proper diſcharge of relative, civil, moral, and religious obligations. " Whatſoever things are true, honeſt, juſt, pure, lovely, and of good report," are commanded: the contrary are prohibited, not only in act, but in thought, on pain of forfeiting the favour of God. But, neither " the law given by Moſes, " nor the grace and truth which came by Jeſus " Chriſt."

" Chriſt," convey the leaſt intimation, that the diſtinction of " high and low, rich and " poor," is reprehenſible, and ſhould be removed: on the contrary, ſeveral reciprocal duties, grounded on that very inequality, are repeatedly inculcated in both Teſtaments.

In the Moſaic Law, which is briefly comprehended in theſe ſayings, " thou ſhalt love the " Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy " neighbour as thyſelf," diſtinct rules of conduct were laid down for the different orders among men; for " the high and low, the rich and " poor." Judges, officers, and magiſtrates were charged " not to reſpect perſons in judgment, " but to hear the ſmall as well as the great."* Prieſts and Levites were commanded " from " twenty and five years old, and upward, to go " in to wait upon the ſervice of the tabernacle " of the congregation; and from the age of fifty " years to ceaſe waiting upon the ſervice thereof, " and to ſerve no more."† To maſters and ſervants reciprocal duties were enjoined. The rich were commanded " not to oppreſs an hired ſervant " that is poor and needy:"‡ " Not to oppreſs " the ſtranger, not to afflict any widow, or fa- " therleſs child:"§ Not to harden their heart,

* Deut. i. 17.
† Numbers viii. 24. 25.
‡ Deut. xxiv. 14.
§ Exodus xxii. 21. 22.

" nor

" nor ſhut their hand from the poor brother :"* " Not wholly to reap the corners of their field, " nor to gather the gleanings of their harveſt, " nor of their vineyard, but to leave them for " the poor and ſtranger."† The rich were repeatedly reminded (as if it frequently eſcaped their obſervance) that " to do juſtice and " judgment, and to love mercy, were more " acceptable to the Lord, than ſacrifice." " The poor and fatherleſs, the man-ſervant and " maid-ſervant," were exhorted to induſtry, honeſty, and contentment: for, even under the Moſaic Covenant, it was affirmed, " the poor ſhall never ceaſe out of the land."‡ The laws of the two tables, ordained to regulate the conduct of all ranks and degrees of men, expreſsly commanded—" ſix days ſhalt thou labour " —thou ſhalt not ſteal—thou ſhalt not covet " any thing that is thy neighbour's."§ In a word, the firſt Covenant required of each individual the obſervance of thoſe general duties briefly compriſed in the decalogue, together with the performance of thoſe particular duties more immediately connected with his ſtation in life: but, throughout the whole Moſaic Law, the exiſtence of " high and low, rich and poor," is not prohibited.

* Deut. xv. 7. † Leviticus xix. 9. 10.
‡ Deut. xv. 11. § Exodus xx.

The

The Chriſtian Law not only inſiſts on the obſervance of relative, ſocial, and moral obligations, but inculcates obedience from arguments of the moſt ſublime and ſpiritual nature. The various ranks, orders, and degrees of men, are called upon to diſcharge their reſpective duties with fidelity and good will, as they value the favour of God. Thus—Servants are commanded to be "obedient to their maſters, in "ſingleneſs of heart, as unto Chriſt:"* Maſters to remember that "their Maſter alſo is in hea-"ven; neither is there reſpect of perſons with "him:"† "Rulers, who are the miniſters of "God for good, and bear not the ſword in vain," are "not to be a terror to good works, but to the "evil:" and "every ſoul" is exhorted to be "ſubject unto the higher powers; not only for "wrath, but alſo for conſcience ſake."‡

In the Chriſtian Law, the "rich in this world "are charged not to be high-minded, nor to "truſt in uncertain riches, but in the living "God:"§ and the poor, who through the mercy of our Redeemer "have the Goſpel "preached unto them," are not, in that Goſpel,

* Epheſians vi. 5. † Epheſians vi. 9.
‡ Romans xiii. § 1 Timothy vi. 17.

reſtrained

reſtrained from improving their condition, or raiſing themſelves to a more comfortable ſubſiſtence—"Art thou called being a ſervant? "care not for it; but if thou mayeſt be free, "uſe it rather!"*

Moſt of the diſcourſes and parables of our Lord are adapted to the inequalities exiſting among men; and ſeem deſigned to inſtruct us, that as God has "given to every man his work," the improvement, or abuſe, of the diverſe gifts and talents beſtowed upon us, conſtitutes our true character; and reſpectively entitles us to the favour, or expoſes us to the diſpleaſure, of our heavenly Maſter. Such, for inſtance, is the tendency of that inſtructive parable, in which the maſter—"called his own ſervants, and deli-"vered unto them his goods; unto one he gave "five talents, to another two, and to another "one:—after a long time the lord of thoſe "ſervants cometh and reckoneth with them:" rewardeth "the good ſervant, who had been "faithful over a few things;" but commandeth "the unprofitable ſervant to be caſt into outer "darkneſs."† Had we no other than this ſingle parable for our inſtruction, it would authorize

* 1 Corinthians vii. 21. † Matthew xxv.

theſe

theſe two deductions;—' that no juſt objection lies againſt the actual differences, diſparities, and inequalities obſervable in mankind, and that we are all ultimately reſponſible to God.'

In the Apoſtolic Age there were " diverſities " of gifts, differences of adminiſtrations, and " diverſities of operations," for the edification of the church, the ſpiritual body of Chriſt. With reference to thoſe differences St. Paul introduced theſe reflections on the natural body— " If the foot ſhall ſay, becauſe I am not the " hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore " not of the body?—the eye cannot ſay unto the " hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the " head to the feet, I have no need of you."— After theſe reflections, the Apoſtle thus adverted to the diverſe gifts beſtowed on different Chriſtians: " Now ye are the body of Chriſt, " and members in particular: and God hath ſet " ſome in the church, firſt Apoſtles, ſecondarily " Prophets, thirdly Teachers—are all Apoſtles? " are all Prophets? are all Teachers?"*

If no juſt objection lay againſt the " diverſi- " ties of gifts," by which in the original

* 1 Corinthians xii.

eſtabliſhment

eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Church, one diſciple " differed from another ;" by what mode of reaſoning are the diſparities and inequalities, prevalent in human intercourſe and ſociety, to be repreſented as evils which ought univerſally to be removed ? To pervert gifts and talents beſtowed upon us, to neglect the duties of our ſtation, or to apply unjuſtifiable means for our own aggrandizement, ſuch as, " building " our houſe by unrighteouſneſs, and our cham- " bers by wrong," are indeed evils forbidden and condemned in both Teſtaments: but, throughout the whole Moſaic and Chriſtian Covenants, the actual exiſtence of " high and " low, rich and poor," is not once prohibited : therefore, that inequality ſhould not be repreſented as an evil, which ought univerſally to be removed ; but ſhould rather be conſidered as forming one branch of God's moral government over beings placed in a ſtate of probation.

II.—From this view of the ſubject, on the authority of the two authentic teſtimonies of the divine will, the Moſaic and Chriſtian Covenants, I come, in the *ſecond* place, to conſider that the inequality obſervable in human condition, proceeds, in a great degree, from the circumſtances of our nature.

The

The advocates for abſolute equality, in our external condition, have advanced ſome ingenious poſitions, founded principally on the *abuſe* of preſent inequality: but they have not conſidered how much muſt be undone, and what alterations human nature itſelf muſt undergo, before the ſyſtem of abſolute equality can be realized.

Our nature is compounded of mind and body, of reaſon and paſſion, of intellectual faculties and animal propenſities. Some modern writers indeed maintain, that the mind is not ſuperior to the body; that reaſon is not more noble than paſſion: poſitions in perfect conſonance with the modern ſyſtem of equality. But if paſſion, or animal propenſities, " gain the dominion over " us," reaſon and intellectual faculties will be impaired and depreſſed.

The ſame individual feels the helpleſs ſtate of infancy, the fervour and inexperience of youth, maturity of ſtrength and judgment in manhood, and, if life be extended to extreme old age, ' a ſecond childiſhneſs.' Three at leaſt of theſe ſtages in the progreſs of our exiſtence require aid and inſtruction, care and conſolation, from the ſtrength, experience, and underſtanding of others.

In two or more individuals, on whom from infancy the ſame degree of attention and inſtruction is beſtowed, there ſhall yet be found different degrees both of corporeal ſtrength and mental energy. It is not poſſible to over-rule that natural inequality, and its various conſequences.—

If the ſyſtem of equality be incompatible with the natural progreſs of our exiſtence as *Individuals*; ſtill more incompatible will it be found, when applied to the improvement of *Society*.

Even in one houſehold, or family, where mutual regard and attachment have a natural foundation, it has never yet been found practicable to manage, or bring into due order, the few individuals compoſing that ſmall ſociety; unleſs one perſon, at leaſt, aſſumes authority, and enforces proper rules of conduct. Can then a community compoſed of many families, or a nation comprehending many communities, be eſtabliſhed, governed, and preſerved on the ſyſtem of equality, which denies the right of exerciſing authority, and contends for the abolition of the ancient and univerſal, though

now

now by ſome accounted ' barbarous diſtinc-
' tions,'* of " rulers and ſubjects, maſters and
" ſervants, high and low, rich and poor."
Throughout the whole of man's hiſtory, ancient
and modern, ſacred and prophane, a com-
munity has never exiſted (becauſe it never can
exiſt) without ſubordination. A lively imagi-
nation may form in theory an abſolutely perfect
government on the ſyſtem of equality: but, as
ſoon as an attempt is made to realize the ſyſtem,
theoriſts find they are offering violence to nature,
and labouring to accompliſh what human power
never will accompliſh, till it can create a race
of beings diſſimilar to man.

Our natural wants are principally ſupplied by
cultivating the Earth, on which our Creator has
placed us. That occupation muſt engage the
attention of numbers of it's inhabitants. " Much
" food is in the tillage of the poor." But,
without poverty, ſufficient labour would not be
exerted: without poverty, commerce could have
no exiſtence: and, without commerce, there
would be few means either of ſecuring domeſtic
enjoyment, or of repelling external violence.

* Thomas Paine.

In the multifarious wants, purſuits, avocations, and intereſts inſeparable from ſociety, many perſons are engaged in acquiring a knowledge of the moſt uſeful occupations in life; while others explore the intricacies of ſcience, and inveſtigate various branches of knowledge, rendered valuable through the imperfection of our nature. If corporeal ſtrength, or dexterity in any manual art, be the object in view, the powers of the mind cannot fully be expanded; if we cultivate mental endowments, we cannot in the former likewiſe "gain the maſtery." In the various departments neceſſary for the exiſtence and preſervation of civil order, there muſt (humanly ſpeaking) be different ranks and degrees of men, *for the good of the whole:* and while numbers, in humble ſtations, devote their powers to active and laborious employments; others, in higher ſtation, gain the leiſure and tranquillity requiſite—for framing wiſe and equal laws—for conſidering and relieving the maladies incident to the human frame, and—for directing the ſoul to aſpire after and ſecure endleſs peace and bleſſedneſs.—In proportion as theſe, and various other valuable objects, are the better underſtood, ſociety at large reaps the benefit—human nature is benefited.

In

In a moral view, many wiſe and good ends are obtained by the exiſtence of "high and low, "rich and poor, one with another;" numberleſs opportunities are preſented for exerciſing private and public virtues, for manifeſting "good will towards men," for "bearing one "another's burdens," and thus co-operating with the diſpenſations of Providence.—

Having endeavoured to point out, that the exiſtence of "high and low, rich and poor," is not prohibited in the two authentic teſtimonies of the divine will, the Moſaic and Chriſtian Covenants; and that the inequality obſervable in human condition, proceeds, in a great degree from the circumſtances of our nature; on theſe grounds may we not admit this general propoſition?—That the exiſtence of "high and low, "rich and poor," obſervable in nations, throughout all ages, ſhould not be repreſented as an evil, which ought univerſally to be removed; but ſhould rather be conſidered, as forming one branch of God's moral government over beings placed in a ſtate of probation.

From the whole ſubject thus conſidered, two concluſions will now be deduced.

The *firſt* is—That no encouragement ſhould be given to thoſe miſchievous writers and diſturbers of ſociety, who, diſſatisfied with every thing around them, with whatever actually exiſts in the natural and civil, in the moral and religious world, are anxious to ſubvert uſages, which have demonſtrated their own utility; maxims, which have ſtood the teſt of experience; and truths, which have gained the aſſent, and proved the ſtrong conſolation, of the wiſe and good in all ages.

The idea of Equality is not new: it has of old been a favourite theme with the turbulent and ſeditious. Civil commotions have uſually been preceded by attempts to equalize property, by clamours for *Agrarian* Laws.* The fury of the

* 'Tum primum (U. C. 266) Lex agraria promulgata 'eſt; nunquam deinde uſque ad hanc memoriam ſine maximis 'motibus rerum agitata.'

TIT. LIVII HISTOR. L. ii. c. 41.

——— 'biennium tranquillæ externæ res, diſcordia domi 'ex agrariis legibus fuit.'

L. iv. c. 47.

——— 'Tiberius Gracchus—promulgatis agrariis legibus, 'omnibus ſtatum concupiſcentibus, ſumma imis miſcuit, et 'in præruptum, atque anceps periculum adduxit rempub-'licam.'

C. VELL. PATERCULI HISTOR. L. ii. c. 2.

ſeditious

ſeditious may, indeed, in a ſhort ſpace of time, demoliſh the work of ages, deface the veſtiges of antiquity, annihilate the recording page, and overthrow the labours of the learned and ingenious: after deſtroying inanimate objects (though in many reſpects highly valuable) it may exerciſe barbarities on the living, the very thought of which makes the blood run cold. But, when the ſeditious have proceeded to thoſe extremities; when, on the true levelling principle, rich merchants are plundered for their poſſeſſions; learned men are outraged, becauſe of ſuperior mental endowments; legiſlators are proſcribed for enacting and executing ſalutary laws, and prieſts are maſſacred for inculcating "the "fear of God;"—yet the work of levellers is not completed, nor ever will be, unleſs they can extirpate the human race, or extinguiſh reaſon, the gift of God.—But let every friend to order and ſociety, to virtue and religion, diſcountenance, and guard againſt, thoſe, who take pleaſure in diſturbing the peace of ſociety, under the oſtenſible plea of removing diſparities and inequalities; which prevail among all people on the face of the earth, and are indiſpenſable in every civilized nation, where order, law, and religion are eſtabliſhed.—

2. The *ſecond* concluſion is—that, ſenſible of the numerous advantages, which We, of this nation, now enjoy, in the protection of our perſons, in the ſecurity of our property, in the profeſſion of religious perſuaſions, and in a National Eſtabliſhment of the Chriſtian Religion under a Proteſtant Church;—we ſhould teſtify our acknowledgment of theſe ſeveral benefits, not by perpetually ſowing the ſeeds of diſcontent, not by clandeſtinely labouring to undermine the whole Conſtitution, but by openly and manfully upholding and ſtrengthening the bands of ſociety; knowing there can be no order without ſubordination, no liberty without law, no comfort without religion. We ſhould neither let the licentious ſuggeſtions of unbelievers rob our hearts of the *Hope* of eternal recompence: nor the narrow ideas of levellers taint our minds with envy and malevolence at the temporal pre-eminence of others.

The inequality exiſting in our nation withholds from no individual a recompence for uſeful and honeſt exertions: Induſtry, in the common concerns of life, ſecures many preſent advantages: ſuperior merit and ability in civil and commercial intereſts, in naval and military operations, in judicial and ſcientific purſuits, deſervedly

deſervedly raiſe the poſſeſſor from obſcurity to fame, from competence to affluence, and ſeldom fail of obtaining honourable diſtinction. Shall equality deprive the induſtrious and intelligent of the fruits, or juſt reward, of their honeſt exertions, by dividing them with the indolent and worthleſs? Shall the levelling ſyſtem be permitted thus to ſuppreſs human energy, to damp true genius, to weaken laudable ambition, and extinguiſh every generous ſentiment? Temporal pre-eminence, among us, is more frequently the conſequence of merit than of birth; and is a bleſſing in the perſons of thoſe, who are careful to lighten the burdens, and redreſs the wrongs ſuſtained by their fellow creatures. The power of the Magiſtrate is looked up to with reverence, when 'mercy ſeaſons juſtice;' and we have reaſon to exult in beholding—men of the brighteſt talents and high profeſſional knowledge, the firmeſt friends to order, government and religion. Integrity of life, adorned with intellectual excellence, does honour to human nature; and it is evident to a demonſtration, that the general good is beſt promoted, when moral obligations are moſt faithfully diſcharged; that the public welfare, with which private happineſs is inſeparably connected, cannot more

effectually be ſecured, than when relative and ſocial duties are honourably fulfilled. Without envying, or repining at the more elevated, though not on that account the leſs anxious, condition of others, (for "*man* is born unto "trouble,") our thoughts ſhould principally be engaged in attending to the duties of our reſpective ſtations. Poverty and Riches are in truth comparative terms: each ſtate has its advantages and its evils. If the condition of the poor ſubjects them to bodily labour, it preſerves them from many bodily and mental maladies connected with affluence: If they are ſtrangers to many artificial enjoyments, they are likewiſe ſtrangers to many imaginary wants. In the ordinary diſpenſations of Providence induſtry and honeſty ſecure the moſt neceſſary, and for that reaſon the moſt deſirable, comforts of life: and the honeſt and induſtrious are highly valuable members of ſociety.—

We cannot doubt, from natural conceptions of the Supreme Being, and from the gracious tendency of divine Revelation, that our Creator has in view the temporal and the eternal happineſs of all his creatures. "It is not the will "of your Father, which is in heaven, that "one

" one of theſe little ones ſhould periſh."*—In this world, the means of happineſs are manifeſtly various; but, through the over-ruling hand of Providence, they are univerſal.

Let us ever bear in mind, that the Creator is likewiſe the Governor, and the Preſerver of men. " From the place of his habitation, he looketh " upon all the inhabitants of the earth."† " The high and lofty One, that inhabiteth " eternity, dwelleth with him alſo that is of " an humble ſpirit."‡ And the Son of God, " though he was rich, yet for our ſakes became " poor, that we through his poverty might be " rich."§ The truth of his divine miſſion, and the greatneſs of his love to man, were both atteſted by this, that " the Poor have the Goſpel " preached unto them." In that Goſpel, we are all exhorted to prepare our ſouls for the approaching hour, which will ultimately place, " high and low, rich and poor, one with " another," in the grave. There, indeed, " the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and the " weary be at reſt: there the priſoners reſt

* Matthew xviii. 14.
† Pſalm xxxiii. 14.
‡ Iſaiah lvii. 15.
§ 2 Corinthians viii. 9.

" together:

" together: they hear not the voice of the " oppreſſor, the ſmall and the great are there, " and the ſervant is free from his maſter."* From that awful period no diſtinction will remain, but that which ſhall be confirmed by the omniſcient JUDGE in this bleſſed eulogy— " Well done, good and faithful ſervants, enter " ye into the joy of our Lord."

* Job iii.

Bleſſing and honour, and glory and power, be unto Him that ſitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. AMEN.

ON LIBERTY.

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Cathedral Church of St. Paul,

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,

THE

JUDGES,

ALDERMEN, SERJEANTS AT LAW,

SHERIFFS,

AND

CITY OFFICERS,

ON

SUNDAY, THE TWENTY-SECOND OF JUNE, 1794,

BEING THE

First Sunday in Trinity Term.

SERMON V.

II EPISTLE GENERAL OF ST. PETER, CHAP. THE SECOND, PART OF THE NINETEENTH VERSE.

WHILE THEY PROMISE THEM LIBERTY, THEY THEMSELVES ARE THE SERVANTS OF CORRUPTION.

THE "Liberty" frequently mentioned in the New Teſtament ſtands oppoſed to the ritual law of Moſes, to the ſuperſtition of the heathens, and to the ſlavery of ſin. In each of thoſe views it forms the ſubject of many inſtructions delivered by the Apoſtles, and is properly and emphatically ſtiled "the liberty wherewith Chriſt "hath made us free."*

To refute the aſperſions and calumnies thrown on the firſt converts to the Chriſtian faith, becauſe they acknowledged themſelves diſciples of a crucified Maſter, St. Peter, in his firſt epiſtle general, exhorted them to have their "converſation

* Galatians v. 1.

" tion honeſt among the Gentiles; with well-
" doing to put to ſilence the ignorance of
" fooliſh men; as free, and not uſing their
" liberty for a cloke of maliciouſneſs." In his ſecond epiſtle general he condemned the doctrines and practices of ſome falſe teachers under the Goſpel; and to remove from the minds of his diſciples their aſtoniſhment that falſe teachers ſhould ariſe under the new Covenant, he obſerved, there had been falſe prophets under the old Covenant: " there were falſe prophets alſo
" among the people; even as there ſhall be
" falſe teachers among you: who privily ſhall
" bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the
" Lord that bought them: and many ſhall fol-
" low their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom
" the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of."
In his deſcription of thoſe falſe teachers, he repreſented them, " walking in the luſt of un-
" cleanneſs, deſpiſing government," and ridiculing religion. To caution his converts, as it became the faithful miniſter of Chriſt, againſt liſtening to the inſtructions, or being impoſed on by the promiſes of ſuch men, St. Peter affirmed, that " while they promiſe them liberty,
" they themſelves are the ſervants of corrup-
" tion."

The

The glorious name of " Liberty," though highly intereſting to every reaſonable creature, yet, in common with other intereſting ſubjects, has, of late, been exhibited in many falſe points of view. It may not therefore, I truſt, be unſeaſonable, if I endeavour, in the following diſcourſe, to ſhew, that the Liberty " promiſed by " the ſervants of corruption" in theſe days, is incompatible with nature, ſociety, and religion; and afterwards deduce, from the whole ſubject, two practical inferences.

The promiſe of complete natural liberty may allure and captivate, but it cannot be made good to thoſe who live in ſociety. The natural liberty held forth by " the ſervants of corrup- " tion," is of the moſt extenſive, but not of the moſt innocent kind; it promiſes exemption from all preſcription and authority, and allows the indulgence of the paſſions without reſtraint.

To perſuade men to gratify licentious inclinations may not be an arduous undertaking: the paſſions are of themſelves ſufficiently ſuſceptive of impreſſion: but much miſrepreſentation and falſe colouring are neceſſary to efface, from civilized minds, the idea, that, to the *abuſe* of the paſſions, ſhame and diſgrace are juſtly annexed.

annexed. Ambiguity of language, and ſophiſtry of argument, conveyed under the unexceptionable titles of moral eſſays, and ſyſtems of education, are artfully employed to recommend that liberty, which nature muſt abhor; for it leads to approve the ſeduction of innocence, and to palliate the ſins of adultery and ſelf-murder. The miſeries inſeparable from guilt are carefully concealed: the blandiſhments of ſenſe are licentiouſly diſplayed: by thoſe arts, the young and inexperienced, the thoughtleſs and wavering, are the more eaſily enſnared; nor, till they have exchanged innocence for guilt, do they find that, in liſtening to the promiſe of *natural* liberty, they have rendered themſelves "ſervants of corruption."

For a rational enjoyment of exiſtence, Nature points to domeſtic happineſs, and ſocial intercourſe: the former, by preſenting diſparity of years, introduces diſparity of underſtanding and authority: the latter can have no exiſtence without ſubordination, nor any ſtability but through the medium of wiſe and equal laws to protect (among other excellent uſes) the weak againſt the powerful, to render property ſecure, and life itſelf valuable. If, in conſequence of legal authority, every individual finds ſome portion

of

of his natural liberty reſtrained, he will likewiſe find ample recompenſe for that reſtraint, in the numberleſs advantages, conveniencies, and comforts, derived from ſocial order: above all, in having his underſtanding cultivated, and his heart improved through the communication of knowledge and wiſdom.

But this is not the civil liberty held forth, by "the ſervants of corruption." They ſufficiently diſcover what we are to underſtand by their promiſes, when their deſcription of unalienable and impreſcriptible rights is calculated to overthrow the exerciſe of all legal authority; when they vilify every actual form of government; when they inculcate that ſubordination is diſgraceful to the dignity of man, and that the diſparities and inequalties obſervable among human beings call for univerſal abolition. All exiſting governments, complex in their nature, as they involve various connexions and dependencies, partake of the imperfection adhering to every thing human. Yet, whoever attempts to remove imperfection by deſtroying the foundations of ſociety, would diſcover not leſs madneſs than the phyſician would, who ſhould aim at reſtoring bodily health by ſtopping the fountain of life itſelf. If any one, viewing with an

envious eye unavoidable diſparities among men, and ſome ſpecific marks of diſtinction, conferred both as a reward for uncommon merit, and an incitement to laudable ambition, will ſtill contend for abſolute equality, and the full enjoyment of natural liberty, he adopts a ſyſtem deſtitute of foundation in the nature of things, and deſtructive of ſocial obligations.

To thoſe who, in private life, have caſt off all ſenſe of decency, and all regard to moral principle, the promiſe of exemption from legal authority may prove a temptation, too alluring to be reſiſted whenever favouring circumſtances concur, to " bind kings in chains, and their " nobles in links of iron;" to trample under foot all order, law, and government. But the true friend to ſociety, among other obligations, will think it incumbent on him to ſubmit to wiſe and equal laws; to bear with cheerfulneſs his proportion of the burdens of ſociety, while he enjoys it's manifold advantages; and to promote, in his ſphere of activity, peace and good order.

But vain will be the attempt to maintain order and ſocial happineſs, if *Religion* is deſpiſed. The faithful ſervant of God, the trueſt friend

friend to man, ſenſible that the well-being of ſociety depends on the exiſtence of religious principle, will be deſirous that all orders and degrees of men ſhall be impreſſed with "the "fear of God." Not ſo "the ſervants of cor-"ruption:" averſe to the ſalutary reſtraints, in wiſdom, laid on human paſſions under the ſanctions of natural and revealed religion, they boldly aſſert (and expect that the boldneſs of their aſſertions ſhall be taken for proof) that all religion is prieſtcraft; that Chriſtianity is fable and impoſture: and, to complete their idea of liberty, they promiſe to free our minds from "the fear of God:"[1] as if there could be

[1] 'In one of the *good writings* induſtriouſly circulated 'among the people (in *France*) appears the true ſpirit and 'principle of this reform: it is there maintained in plain 'and direct terms—"That provided the idea of a Su-"preme Being be nothing more than a philoſophical ab-"ſtraction—a guide to the imagination in the purſuit of "cauſes and effects—a reſting place for the curioſity of en-"quiring minds—a notion merely ſpeculative—and from "which no practical conſequences are to be applied to hu-"man life, there is no great danger in ſuch an idea: but "if it is to be made the foundation of morality—if it is "to be accompanied by the ſuppoſition, that there exiſts "a God who preſides over the affairs of the world, and "rewards or puniſhes men for their actions on earth, ac-"cording to ſome principle of retributive juſtice, there can "be no opinion more prejudicial to the intereſts of ſociety.

 "That

be wiſdom in denying our Redeemer, or valour in defying Omnipotence.

Among the benefits propoſed from aboliſhing religion are reckoned freedom from the unwelcome checks of conſcience, and deliverance from the more unwelcome apprehenſion of a future day of juſt retribution; ſince ſome modern philoſophers maintain, that 'death is eternal ſleep,' and that there is not ſufficient evidence for admitting the authenticity of Revelation, the expectation of a life to come, nor even the exiſtence of God. But are they ſo little acquainted with the nature and the hiſtory of man, as not to know, that ſome ſenſe of religion is inſeparable from the human mind; that, when deprived of true religion, it has recourſe to that which is falſe; and with enthuſiaſm

" That the idea of a ſupreme Deity is a deſpotic idea, and " muſt be ſo in all times—that mankind can never be really " *liberated* or *republicaniſed*, ſo long as they ſhall preſerve " ſuch a notion—that beings, who adore an inviſible Maſter, " will eaſily believe that he may accompliſh his ends by " earthly agents; and reaſoning by analogy, they muſt con- " clude the neceſſity of ſome ranks and orders of ſociety, " and finally of ſome regular government among mankind; " and thus the ſervitude of the underſtanding will enſlave " every moral and political principle."—

LORD MORNINGTON'S SPEECH, Jan. 21, 1794.

adopts

adopts errors and deluſions diſgraceful to reaſon? Before they proſcribe the Chriſtian Faith, ſhould they not, if poſſible, propoſe another "founded on better promiſes;" more adapted to the nature of man; and more worthy of God for its author? Before they extirpate true religion, ſhould they not form ſome eſtimate of the complicated evils and miſeries which will enſue, on reviving the ſuperſtitions of the heathens? or, do they imagine, that by prohibiting the worſhip of the one true God, they ſhall likewiſe be able to prevent adoration "unto "them which by nature are no gods?" The learned author of 'the Antiquities of Greece,' has obſerved, that 'the Grecians in general, 'and the Athenians in particular, were ſo 'exceſſively ſuperſtitious, that they would not 'be content to worſhip their ancient deities, 'but frequently conſecrated new ones of their 'own making; and beſide theſe, aſſumed into 'the number of their own, the gods of all the 'nations with whom they had any commerce; 'inſomuch that, even in Heſiod's time, they 'were thirty thouſand.'[a] But the abſurdity was the leaſt offenſive part of ancient ſuperſtition: it was accompanied with groſs immorality and

[a] Archæol. Græca. Vol. i. p. 184. 5th Edit.

extreme inhumanity. How dreadful the idea, that in the ſervice of their gods, the altars were polluted with human blood! 'Examples of 'this ſort of inhumanity were very common in 'moſt of the barbarous nations.'[1]

To check the progreſs of ſuperſtition and idolatry, and to reſtore the knowledge and worſhip of God, were among the gracious purpoſes of "the Law given by Moſes." In that law the Jews were repeatedly cautioned againſt relapſing into idolatry. "When thou art come into the land "which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou "ſhalt not learn to do after the abominations "of thoſe nations:—For every abomination to "the Lord, which he hateth, have they done "unto their gods; for even their ſons and their "daughters they have burnt in the fire to their "gods."* After the wonderful power exerted to reſcue the Jews from the midſt of an idolatrous nation; after the repeated injunctions given to deter them from adopting the ſuperſtitions of ſurrounding nations; is it not lamentable to reflect, that, in their ſubſequent hiſtory, "the children of Judah ſet their abo-"minations in the houſe of the Lord to pollute "it; and built the high places of Tophet, to

[1] Idem, p. 218.

* Deut. xviii. 9. and xii. 31.

"burn

" burn their ſons and their daughters in the " fire?"*

In theſe days ſome minds are diſpoſed to give little credit to heathen, and leſs to ſacred teſtimony: but can they deny the preſent exiſtence of inhuman rites amongſt idolatrous nations? Can they diſprove the account recently given by one, not more juſtly renowned for a ſpirit of laudable enterpriſe, than for his love of truth, who mentions, 'the ſacrificing, at 'one time, *ten human victims* from amongſt the 'inferior ſort of people?'† And in another paſſage he obſerves, with equal humanity and good ſenſe—'It is much to be regretted, that 'a practice ſo horrid in its own nature, and ſo 'deſtructive of that inviolable right of ſelf-'preſervation, which every one is born with, 'ſhould be found ſtill exiſting; and (ſuch is 'the power of ſuperſtition to counteract the firſt 'principles of humanity!) exiſting amongſt a 'people, in many reſpects emerged from the 'brutal manners of ſavage life. What is ſtill 'worſe, it is probable, that theſe bloody rites 'of worſhip are prevalent throughout all the 'wide extended iſlands of the Pacific Ocean.'‡

* Jeremiah vii. 30. 31.

† CAPTAIN COOK'S VOYAGE to the PACIFIC OCEAN. Vol. i. page 351. 4to. 1784.

‡ Idem. Vol. ii. page 41.

Thoſe writers, who, in this '*Age of* '*Reaſon*,'[1] promiſe to illuminate and regenerate our minds, by *denying*, not diſproving, the authenticity of the Scriptures, and the divine miſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, ſhould, *for Humanity's ſake*, conſider, whether, if we contumelioufly reject the all-ſufficient "ſacrifice for ſin," in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt, "once offered, and once "for all," we ſhall not accelerate the return of the age of barbariſm, and revive, together with the impurities, the cruelties of heatheniſm; whether, by "not liking to retain God in our "thoughts, God may not give us over to a re-"probate mind;" and whether it will be poſſible to preſerve *any* portion of natural, civil, or religious liberty, by preferring that "wiſdom "which deſcendeth not from above, but is "earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh." "The wiſdom, "that *is* from above, is firſt pure, then peace-"able, gentle, and eaſy to be entreated, full of "mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and "without hypocriſy."*

[1] 'How unwilling the partizans of the Chriſtian faith 'may be to believe, or to acknowledge it, it is neverthe-'leſs true, that the age of ignorance commenced with the 'Chriſtian ſyſtem:—only another ſpecies of mythology.'

'The AGE of REASON.' By THOMAS PAINE. Paris, 1794. Page 35.

* James iii. 15. 17.

—I will

—I will treſpaſs on your patience, while I deduce from this view of the "Liberty," which is to be expected at the hands of thoſe, who, in theſe days, "walk in uncleanneſs, deſpiſe "government," and ridicule religion, two practical inferences.

1. We have ſeen that the Liberty, ſpecioufly held forth in modern times, by "the ſervants "of corruption," has, in truth, theſe three objects in view—to inflame the paſſions—to overthrow civil government—and to extirpate the Chriſtian Religion.

The uſurpers of power, in a neighbouring nation, have for ſome time been acting with thoſe three objects in view: they have publicly diſcarded all ſenſe of decency; avowed hoſtility to every eſtabliſhed Government, and blaſphemed the Saviour of the world.[1] The ſeeds

[1] 'The Municipality of Paris decreed'—"that all churches "and temples of religious worſhip, of whatever denomina-"tion, exiſting at Paris, ſhould be inſtantly ſhut:" 'In 'conſequence of this decree, Proteſtant as well as Catholic 'churches were ſhut up; and thoſe, who dared to celebrate 'religious worſhip of any kind, were arreſted, and treated as 'ſuſpected perſons. The Old and New Teſtament were 'publicly burnt as prohibited books.'

LORD MORNINGTON'S SPEECH.

of

of thoſe evils were, indeed, many years before induſtriouſly ſown by ſentimental writers, who exerted uncommon talents to recommend vice and ſenſuality; by political inſtructors, who filled the minds of the people with impracticable ideas of independence; and by philoſophers, who diſtinguiſhed themſelves (not like the Britiſh philoſophers, *Bacon*, *Locke*, and *Newton*, by ſtudying, underſtanding, and embracing the Chriſtian faith, but) by treating with contempt and ridicule both revealed and natural religion.[1] National apoſtacy is therefore the leſs to be wondered at, when, through the miſchievous perſeverance of ſuch guides, the people were eſtranged from true religion, and debaſed by ſenſuality; nor will the tranſition from vice and ignorance to anarchy and barbarity, be found either difficult or ſlow.

In *this* nation, where the grounds of civil government, and the principles of true religion are generally well underſtood and highly valued, We ſhall not ſo eaſily be perſuaded—that liberty and licentiouſneſs are the ſame—that civil government, as ſuch, is tyranny—and that the

[1] "He, that hateth Me, hateth my Father alſo."
JOHN xv. 23.

worſhip

worſhip of God is beneath the dignity of man. We have not ſo imperfectly enjoyed the benefits of ſociety, as to ſurrender our intereſt in them, on the promiſe of ſuch liberty. We may, at leaſt for a while, reſt ſatisfied with obſerving the progreſs and the effects of that promiſe on the nation now making the experiment: and, from the extreme miſeries endured in that guilty land, may learn theſe profitable leſſons—not to foſter a ſpirit of rebellion, more eaſily raiſed than ſubdued—not to encourage the diffuſion of thoſe pernicious ſentiments, which, under the plea of attaining more civil liberty, or a more perfect government, are now directed to accelerate the ſubverſion of legal authority, and the diſſolution of ſocial order.

2. The *ſecond* concluſion, deducible from the whole ſubject, affects us in a ſtill more important view; for it involves the intereſts of religion.

On *Religion* depends our Peace in time and in eternity. To be deprived of perſonal freedom, ſeparated from thoſe we love, or to be injured in our fortune and reputation, are evils of a limited magnitude: but they bear no proportion to loſing "the favour of God, which is

"better

" better than life itſelf." On that ground we may form ſome idea of the *malignity* of thoſe writers, who, not ſufficiently gratified with aiming at the deſtruction of ſocial obligations, labour to rob the mind of the conſolations of religion; and, with that view, apply their ſophiſtry, wit, and ridicule, to miſrepreſent the truth, the evidences, and the doctrines of Chriſtianity.

Through the mercy of God, the light of the Goſpel has ariſen on nations, which once " ſat in darkneſs;" which bowed the knee to idols of wood and ſtone, and dipped their hands in the blood of human ſacrifices.[1] The Goſpel of Chriſt

[1] ' Præſidium poſthac impoſitum victis, excifique luci, ' ſævis ſuperſtitionibus ſacri: nam *cruore captivo* adolere ' aras, et *hominum fibris* conſulere deos fas habebant.'

C. TACITI ANNAL. l. xiv. c. 30, (ſpeaking of the BRITONS).

' On a recent peruſal of Acoſta's Authentic Hiſtory of ' South America, I could not avoid being ſtruck with his ' account of the dreadful ſanguinary ſacrifices of which both ' the Peruvians and Mexicans are enormouſly guilty, and ' I ſhall here inſert it, as forming a ſtriking and gloomy ' ſimilitude to the bloody ſacrifices of the old Scythians ' and Indians—" The ancient Peruvians uſed to ſacrifice " young children from foure, or ſix, yeares old unto tenne; " and

Chriſt, for nearly eighteen hundred years, has improved the underſtanding, meliorated the hearts of millions of faithful diſciples, and "brought many ſons to glory."—May we never be found inſenſible to it's truth and excellence! "Though iniquity abound," may we never "follow a multitude to do evil"—to "blaſ-"pheme that worthy name by which we are "called"—to deny the Lord, who "hath re-"deemed us to God by his blood."* Bleſt with the light of the Goſpel, let it be our wiſdom "to walk as children of light;" to abjure, as it becometh men, the impure, ſeditious, and atheiſtical principles of thoſe, who, "while "they promiſe liberty, are themſelves the ſer-"vants of corruption:" let it be our wiſdom, as it becometh Chriſtians, to "ſtand faſt in "the liberty, wherewith *Chriſt* hath made us "free."—

"and the greateſt parte of theſe ſacrifices were for the "affaires that did concern the Ynca, as in ſickneſs, for his "recovery; and, when he went to the warres, for victory. "In theſe ſolemnities they ſacrificed the number of two "hundred children."

MAURICE'S INDIAN ANTIQUITIES, Vol. v, p. 788 and 789, 8vo. London, 1794.

* Revelations v. 9.

In

In a word, teſtify your obedience to the will of God, "by patient continuance in well-"doing:" for, "ſo is the will of God, that "with well-doing ye may put to ſilence the "ignorance of fooliſh men: as free, and not "uſing your liberty for a cloke of maliciouſ-"neſs, but as the ſervants of God.—

"HONOUR ALL MEN—LOVE THE BROTHERHOOD—

"FEAR GOD—HONOUR THE KING."†

† 1 Peter ii. 15.—17.

The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt, be with you all.

AMEN.

ON SEEKING THE PEACE OF THE CITY.

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN THE

Pariſh Church of St. Lawrence Jewry,

BEFORE THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE THE LORD MAYOR,

THE

WORSHIPFUL THE ALDERMEN,

THE

RECORDER, THE SHERIFFS,

AND THE

LIVERIES OF THE SEVERAL COMPANIES

OF THE

CITY OF LONDON,

ON

THE TWENTY-NINTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1794,

BEFORE THE

ELECTION OF A LORD MAYOR.

SERMON VI.

JEREMIAH CHAP. XXIX. PART OF THE SEVENTH VERSE.

SEEK THE PEACE OF THE CITY—AND PRAY UNTO THE LORD FOR IT: FOR IN THE PEACE THEREOF SHALL YE HAVE PEACE.

THE Captivity of the Jews in Babylon had been predicted more than a century before its commencement by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, in the following words addreſſed to king Hezekiah: "Hear the word of the Lord of Hoſts: Behold, "the days come, that all that is in thine houſe, "and that which thy fathers have laid up in "ſtore until this day, ſhall be carried to "Babylon: nothing ſhall be left, ſaith the "Lord."* Though "the kings of the earth, "and all the inhabitants of the world, would "not have believed that the adverſary and the "enemy ſhould have entered into the gates of

* Iſaiah xxxix. 5, 6.

" Jeruſalem;"* yet, according to the " ſure " word of prophecy," " the king of Babylon " came and all his army, againſt Jeruſalem; " and they beſieged it, and took it, and burnt " all the houſes with fire."† To thoſe Jews, who ſurvived that ſore viſitation, and " by the " waters of Babylon ſat down and wept, when " they remembered thee, O Sion;"‡ the Prophet *Jeremiah* was commanded to deliver theſe words of exhortation and comfort: " Thus ſaith " the Lord of Hoſts, the God of Iſrael, unto " all that are carried away captives from Je- " ruſalem unto Babylon; build ye houſes and " dwell in them, and plant gardens, and eat " the fruit of them; take ye wives, that ye may " be increaſed, and not diminiſhed; and ſeek " the peace of the city, whither I have cauſed " you to be carried away captives, and pray " unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof, " ſhall ye have peace."

If Jewiſh Captives, in the land of their victorious enemies, heathens and idolaters, who, without mercy had plundered and deſtroyed by fire the city of Jeruſalem and the temple of God,

* Lamentations iv. 12. † Jeremiah xxxix. 1. 8.
‡ Pſalm cxxxvii.

were

were commanded, in the name of " the Lord " God of Hoſts, to ſeek the peace of the city, " whither they were carried away captives, and " to pray unto the Lord for it;" ſhall thoſe principles of civil and religious wiſdom ever depart from the minds of fellow Citizens and fellow Chriſtians?

On that ground, and at a period, when the exiſtence of ſociety is endangered by the diffuſion of ſentiments calculated to annihilate every obligation; I truſt, I ſhall neither ſtep beyond the line of my duty, nor unſeaſonably engage your attention, if, on the authority, and in the language of the text, I, *firſt*, exhort you to " ſeek " the peace of the city, and to pray unto the " Lord for it; becauſe in the peace thereof ſhall " ye have peace;" and, in the *ſecond* place, offer ſome reflections applicable to the more immediate purpoſes of your aſſembling together this day.—

I.—The King of Kings in beſtowing diverſe talents and endowments enables us, if we are not wanting to ourſelves, to fulfil all the duties of life. That we are formed for ſociety our natural wants abundantly teſtify; that ſociety is able by ſecuring the enjoyment, to heighten

the value, of exiſtence, is proved by experience: in that view we cannot but acknowledge ourſelves bound to promote its proſperity to the utmoſt of our judgment and ability.

If the comforts of domeſtic life depend on the preſervation of public peace and order; if neither property, nor exiſtence itſelf is ſecure without the ſanction of lawful authority; if theſe ſeveral objects have a tendency to civilize the mind, and meliorate the heart; it is then the indiſpenſible duty, and ſhould, of courſe, be the ſincere deſire of every member of the community to contribute to its general good. For as on the principle of gratitude, parents, who with anxious care have nouriſhed and brought up children, are entitled to every mark of their affection and eſteem; ſo, by analogy, a zealous attention to ſocial ſecurity is incumbent on every individual in his proper ſphere of activity. It comes not within the compaſs of every underſtanding to preſide in the great councils of a nation, to enact laws, to decree judgment, or to command fleets and armies; yet it is greatly in the power of every individual to advance, or to injure, the true intereſts of ſociety.

Hence we may form a judgment of thoſe modern writers, who, from antipathy to all reſtraint,

reſtraint, have addreſſed to ſtates and nations, poſitions tending to undermine both the peace and the exiſtence of ſociety. In maintaining that man's happineſs depends on exemption from all authority, they diſcover as little knowledge of our proper happineſs, as they do of the true grounds of civil liberty, in accounting ſubmiſſion to human power injurious to the 'natural rights of man.' Theſe dictates, the offspring of pride and malevolence, can terminate only in univerſal deſtruction. Every good citizen, every lover of his country, will therefore diſcountenance, as far as his influence extends, ſuggeſtions, which ſtrike at the root of civil government; and will likewiſe, by a wiſe application of the talents, gifts, and graces beſtowed on him, by a faithful diſcharge of the duties connected with his particular ſtation in life, by every prudential meaſure in his power, above all, by the influence of a good example, "ſeek the Peace of the City."—

But, beſides manifeſting an honeſt regard to theſe ſocial obligations, the ſervant of God is commanded to offer up his fervent ſupplications to the throne of Grace: "Seek the peace of the "city; and pray unto the Lord for it."—

" Except the Lord keep the city, the watch-
" man waketh but in vain."* Some modern philoſophers deny that truth; and inculcate, that the care of individuals and the proſperity of nations are objects *beneath* the regard of the Moſt High; that to imagine " the Lord who " dwelleth on high, ſhould humble himſelf to " behold the things that are on earth,"† derogates from the divine perfections; and, by conſequence, that prayer to God is altogether uſeleſs and impertinent. Whether thoſe philoſophical inſtructors inculcate ſuch doctrine in contradiction to the real judgment of their own minds; or, whether they are apprized, and ſo much the more gratified, that it favours the cauſe of Atheiſm; yet, by weakening that religious ſenſe, which is ever our ſecurity and conſolation, they effectually ſubvert all moral principle: for there can be no ſuch principle, where there is " no fear of God." To live " without God in the world," would let in iniquity like a flood. Imagination cannot paint the evils and miſeries, which muſt enſue, whenever a Nation is become ſo abandoned, as to account morality, mere prejudice of education; religion, the artifice of deſigning men;

* Pſalm cxxvii. † Pſalm cxiii.

and

and the acknowledgment of God's exiſtence, a diſparagement to man's underſtanding. When impiety has thus gained the aſcendency, what can be effected by the penalties of human laws? when the fear of *God* is removed, can the fear of *Man* be found an equivalent? can man's power reach the receſſes of the heart? can it check the guilty thought? in private life can it forbid the inflicting ſufferings, not the leſs acute for being the more concealed? in public life can any one momentous duty be faithfully diſcharged without a regard to the omniſcience of God? when conſcience is dethroned, where is the reſtraint, which ſhall give protection to innocence, ſecurity to property, or ſafety to life itſelf? Society muſt rapidly be diſſolved, and be ſucceeded by national confuſion and deſolation.

But, notwithſtanding the ridicule and ſophiſtry of infidels, it is our duty, both as men and as Chriſtians, " to pray unto the Lord." " Should " not a people ſeek unto their God ?"* " Shall " not a man look to his Maker? Shall he look to " to the altars and images, the work of his " hands? Shall he reſpect that which his fingers " have made ?"† Shall he " ſeek unto them

* Iſaiah viii. 19. † Iſaiah xvii. 8. 9.

" that have familiar ſpirits, and unto wizards " that peep and that mutter?"* Shall Chriſtians revive thoſe *ancient abominations?* Shall Chriſtians turn apoſtates, forget their Creator, deny their Sanctifier, and blaſpheme their Redeemer? Shall *they* reject " the wiſdom that is from above?" The neceſſity of adhering to that wiſdom may be learned from marking the conſequences of ſcepticiſm and infidelity: they render every good of life inſipid; they deſtroy mutual confidence; eradicate natural affection, debaſe the underſtanding, and pollute the heart. Every one, who bears " good will towards men," every one who honours the name of God, will therefore cheriſh in his own mind, and cultivate in the hearts of others, a ſenſe of the divine Attributes; and will perſevere, in obedience to the tranſcendent wiſdom of the Goſpel of Chriſt, in making " ſupplications, prayers, interceſſions, " and giving of thanks for all men; for kings, " and for all that are in authority; that we may " lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godli- " neſs and honeſty."†

II.—I now proceed, in the *ſecond* place, to offer ſome reflections, applicable to the more

* Iſaiah viii. 19. † 1 Timothy ii. 1. 2.

immediate

immediate purpoſes of your aſſembling together this day.—

You have here been offering up your praiſes to the Father of all mercies for the bleſſings of creation, providence, and redemption: You have prayed for the continuance of thoſe good things, temporal and ſpiritual, which, in his unerring wiſdom, ſhall be moſt expedient; and, I truſt, you have "lifted up your hearts with your hands unto God."*

You are now proceeding to "ſeek the peace" of this City, in diſcharging one of the important civil truſts repoſed in you, the free Election of a Chief Magiſtrate for this ancient and renowned metropolis; the emporium of trade and commerce; the miſtreſs of arts and ſciences; unrivalled in opulence; unrivalled in the exerciſe of charity.

The wiſdom of your laſt election ſtands confeſt: the qualifications, requiſite to fulfil and to adorn that, no leſs arduous than honourable, ſtation, have appeared in the conduct of your preſent Chief Magiſtrate.

* Lamentations iii. 41.

He

He has manifeſted, in a ſocial view, an open, hearty, manly and ingenuous conduct; ſuperior to all diſguiſe, becauſe void of all diſtruſt; a love of hoſpitality rendered the more acceptable by liberality of ſentiment; eaſineſs of acceſs doubly engaging by a diſpoſition to compaſſionate, and to adminiſter actual relief to the diſtreſſed.

In his judicial capacity He has diſcovered patience and impartiality; a knowledge of the rights, and a regard to the true intereſts, of his fellow citizens.

In the exerciſe of power He has kept a watchful eye over the ſeditious, out of mercy to the friends of peace and good order: and in the hour of danger, by perſonally ſuppreſſing popular turbulence and fury, He ſhewed that intrepid heart and ſound judgment, which have gained the approbation of the Public, and the unanimous thanks of this Corporation.* At all times He has diſplayed an active zeal for the preſervation of the Britiſh Conſtitution, with inflexible Loyalty to his Sovereign.

Above all, in a religious view, He has given ample proofs of unfeigned attachment to ſacred

* September 4, 1794.

obligations

obligations in his general deportment, and in his exemplary obſervance of "the ſeventh day," in mercy as in wiſdom ſet apart from ſecular concerns.—

Permit me now to avail myſelf of the laſt opportunity, in which I may have the honour of addreſſing you, to impreſs upon your minds two important concluſions.

1. The *firſt is*—that though no doubt can be entertained of your diſplaying equal wiſdom in the approaching Election of a Chief Magiſtrate, yet ſuch are "the ſigns of the times," that the Peace of the whole Kingdom may depend on your preſerving the Peace of this City.

If, at this period, the utmoſt vigilance and fortitude are expected of thoſe reſpectable characters, who compoſe the Corporation of London, in every member of the community there ſhould likewiſe be found co-operating zeal for the public good. Every friend to ſociety, anxious for the permanent ſecurity of civil government, will adopt, not thoſe incoherent and intolerant opinions, which have already convulſed one extenſive empire, and now threaten, under the name of 'univerſal civili-

zation,'

zation,' deſtruction to ſurrounding nations; but, thoſe conſiſtent and rational principles, which, forming the baſis of the Britiſh Conſtitution, have made it's Liberty an inheritance too precious to be exchanged for the promiſes, or ſurrendered to the threats of *that Convention*, which "hath "ſaid, there is no God;" and which hath governed by terror; by plunder, ſacrilege, and murder. Theſe were never among the means by which this nation has attained to that high pitch of political and profeſſional knowledge, of moral and religious wiſdom, which throughout the world confer upon the Britiſh name diſtinguiſhed honour and renown. If the duration of that honour and renown be ſtill dear to you, it muſt be ſought as well in your adhering to thoſe maxims of ſound policy, to that diſtribution of equal juſtice, and to that inviolable regard to perſonal freedom, which characterize the genius of BRITONS, and the ſpirit of their laws; as, in your adopting every ſalutary meaſure to rectify the judgment of the miſguided, to diſappoint the counſels of the ſeditious, and to fruſtrate the devices of the wicked.

2. The *ſecond* concluſion is—that the benefits derived from the belief of God's exiſtence, from the teſtimony of the Scriptures, and from the bleſſed

bleſſed hope of Immortality, are too valuable to be exchanged for that miſerable and deſpicable ſyſtem of infidelity, which boaſts of doing great things, while it denies all truth, and favours the progreſs of ſenſuality, blaſphemy, adultery, and ſelf-murder." "The wiſe in heart," who have acceded to the eternal truths of natural religion, and have experienced the conſolations of the Chriſtian Faith, will not conſider the denial of God's exiſtence as a mark of mental ſuperiority; will not account the triumphs of licentiouſneſs in ridiculing religion, prophaning the ſabbath, burning the Scriptures, and blaſpheming the Saviour of the world, among the means either of liberating the mind, or of "exalting a nation;" but will ſtill maintain what experience, the teſt of truth, throughout man's hiſtory has proved; that "ſin is" the deſtruction, as well as "the "reproach, of any people;" and, "though hand "join in hand, the wicked ſhall not be unpu-"niſhed."*

Be it therefore your wiſdom, as it is undoubtedly your intereſt and happineſs, to continue true to religious principles, and to confide in infinite Power and Goodneſs: for "haſt thou "not known? haſt thou not heard, that the

* Proverbs xi. 21,

"everlaſting

" everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the " ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is " weary? there is no ſearching of his under- " ſtanding."* Therefore, " ſanctify the Lord " of Hoſts himſelf, and let Him be your fear " and let Him be your dread."†

May the civil and religious bleſſings derived from the Britiſh Conſtitution, under a limited Monarchy and a Proteſtant Church, preſerve and increaſe in all our hearts and minds ſubmiſſion to the Laws, Loyalty to our Sovereign, and Zeal for the glory of God!

May " Peace be within our walls, and " Plenteouſneſs within our palaces,‡" and may the Bleſſing of God reſt upon us, like as we do put our truſt in Him!

* Iſaiah xl. 28. † Iſaiah viii. 13. ‡ Pſalm cxxii. 7.

To the only wiſe God our Saviour, be glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever. AMEN.

FINIS.